

# THE SURVIVAL OF MAN

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BY  
SIR OLIVER LODGE, F.R.S.





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# THE SURVIVAL OF MAN

A STUDY IN UNRECOGNISED  
HUMAN FACULTY

BY

SIR OLIVER LODGE, F.R.S.



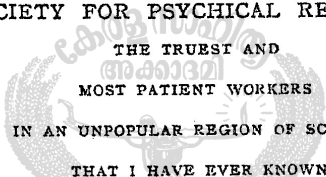
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DEDICATED TO  
THE FOUNDERS OF THE  
SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH  
THE TRUEST AND  
MOST PATIENT WORKERS  
IN AN UNPOPULAR REGION OF SCIENCE  
THAT I HAVE EVER KNOWN



"It is mere dogmatism to assert that we do not survive death, and mere prejudice or inertia to assert that it is impossible to discover whether we do or no. We in the West have hardly even begun to inquire into the matter; and scientific method and critical faculty were never devoted to it, so far as I am aware, previous to the foundation, some quarter of a century ago, of the Society for Psychical Research. . . .

"Alleged facts suggesting *prima facie* the survival of death . . . are now at last being systematically and deliberately explored by men and women of intelligence and good faith bent on ascertaining the truth. . . .

"I am asking you to take seriously a branch of scientific inquiry which may have results more important than any other that is being pursued in our time."

G. LOWES DICKINSON

*Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality, at Harvard, 1908*

"And assuredly the religious implications of all these phenomena are worthy of any man's most serious thought. Those who most feel the importance of the ethical superstructure are at the same time most plainly bound to treat the establishment of the facts at the foundation as no mere personal search for a faith, to be dropped when private conviction has been attained, but as a serious, a continuous, public duty. And the more convinced they are that their faith is sound, the more ready should they be to face distrust and aversion,—to lay their account for a long struggle with the *vis inertiae* of the human spirit."

F. W. H. MYERS, *Human Personality*, ii. 225

## PREFACE TO THE CHEAP EDITION

THE author's conviction of man's survival of bodily death—a conviction based on a large range of natural facts—is well known ; and in this volume some idea can be gained as to the kind of foundation on which in the future he considers that this belief will in due course be scientifically established.

The author gives an account of some of his own investigations into matters connected with psychical research during the last quarter of a century, with an abridgement of contemporary records, selecting not necessarily the most striking but those with which he has himself been in some way concerned. His inquiry, following the lines of the Society for Psychical Research, began with experimental telepathy ; but the largest section of the book treats of automatic writing, trance speech, and other instances of temporary lucidity,—for in this department of the subject he considers that the most direct evidence for continued personal existence and posthumous activity will be found.

Very few examples of actual communication were quoted even in the larger edition, and some of these have now been omitted, because if they are to be useful they must be supplemented by others, and would require another volume. The present book is intended to show that telepathic communication may come through from the other side, and that this view is entitled to critical and careful consideration.



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# THE SURVIVAL OF MAN





**RAMA VARMA RESEARCH INSTITUTE,  
TRICHUR, COCHIN STATE.**

# **THE SURVIVAL OF MAN**

## **SECTION I**

### **AIMS AND OBJECTS OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH**

#### **CHAPTER I**

##### **THE ORIGIN OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH**

**P**UZZLING and weird occurrences have been vouched for among all nations and in every age. It is possible to relegate a good many asserted occurrences to the domain of superstition, but it is not possible thus to eliminate all. Nor is it likely that in the present stage of natural knowledge we are acquainted with all the workings of the human spirit and have reduced them to such simplicity that everything capable of happening in the mental and psychical region is of a nature readily and familiarly to be understood by all. Yet there are many who seem practically to believe in this improbability; for although they are constrained from time to time to accept novel and surprising discoveries in biology, in chemistry, and in physical science generally, they seem tacitly to assume that these are the only parts of the universe in which fundamental discovery is possible, all the rest being too well known.

It is a simple faith, and does credit to the capacity for belief of those who hold it—belief unfounded upon knowledge, and tenable only in the teeth of a great mass of evidence to the contrary.

It is not easy to unsettle minds thus fortified against the intrusion of unwelcome facts ; and their strong faith is probably a salutary safeguard against that unbalanced and comparatively dangerous condition called " open-mindedness," which is ready to learn and investigate anything not manifestly self-contradictory and absurd. Without people of the solid, assured, self-satisfied order, the practical work of the world would not so efficiently be done.

But whatever may be thought of the subject by the majority of people at present, this book is intended to indicate the possibility that discoveries of the very first magnitude can still be made—are indeed in process of being made—by strictly scientific methods, in the region of psychology : discoveries quite comparable in importance with those which have been made during the last century in physics and biology, but discoveries whose opportunities for practical application and usefulness may similarly have to remain for some time in the hands of experts, since perhaps they cannot be miscellaneously absorbed or even apprehended by the multitude without danger.

It has been partly the necessity for caution—the dread of encouraging mere stupid superstition—that has instinctively delayed advance in these branches of inquiry, until the progress of education gave a reasonable chance of a sane and balanced and critical reception by a fairly considerable minority.

But, within the last half century, assertions concerning psychological supernormalities have not only excited general attention, but have rather notably roused the interest of careful and responsible students, both in the domain of science and in that of letters.

Thirty-three years ago, in fact, a special society with distinguished membership was enrolled in London, with the object of inquiring into the truth of many of these assertions. It was founded by a few men of letters and of science who for some years had been acquainted with a number of strange apparent facts—facts so strange and unusual, and yet so widely believed in among a

special coterie of ordinarily sane and sensible people, that it seemed to these pioneers highly desirable either to incorporate them properly into the province of ordered knowledge, or else to extrude them definitely as based upon nothing but credulity, imposture, and deceit.

The attempt was to be made in a serious and responsible spirit, a spirit of genuine "scepticism,"—that is to say, of critical examination and inquiry, not of dogmatic denial and assertion. No phenomenon was to be unhesitatingly rejected because at first sight incredible. No phenomenon was to be accepted which could not make its position good by crucial and repeated and convincing tests. Every class of asserted fact was to have the benefit of inquiry, none was to be given the benefit of any doubt. So long as doubt was reasonable, the phenomenon was to be kept at arm's length : to be criticised as possible, not to be embraced as true.

It is often cursorily imagined that an adequate supply of the critical and cautious spirit necessary in this investigation is a monopoly of professed men of science. It is not so. Trained students of literature—not to mention experts in philosophy—have shown themselves as careful, as exact, as critical, and as cautious, as any professed student of science. They have even displayed an excess of caution. They have acted as a curb and a restraint upon the more technically scientific workers, who—presumably because their constant business is to deal at first hand with new phenomena of one kind or another—have been willing to accept a fresh variety of phenomenon upon evidence not *much* stronger than that to which they were already well accustomed. Whereas some of the men and women of letters associated with the society have been invariably extremely cautious, less ready to be led by obtrusive and plausible appearances, more suspicious of possibilities and even impossibilities of fraud, actually more inventive sometimes of other and quasi-normal methods of explaining inexplicable facts. I name no names, but from a student of science this testimony is due : and it is largely to the sceptical and extremely cautious wisdom of some representatives of

letters and philosophy, as well as to their energy and enthusiasm for knowledge, that the present moderately respectable position of the subject in the estimation of educated people is due.

The first President was Professor Henry Sidgwick, and in his early Presidential Addresses the following sentences occur:—

‘It is a scandal that a dispute as to the reality of these phenomena should still be going on, that so many competent witnesses should have declared their belief in them, that so many others should be profoundly interested in having the question determined, and yet that the educated world, as a body, should still be simply in the attitude of incredulity.

‘Now the primary aim of our Society, the thing which we all unite to promote, whether as believers or non-believers, is to make a sustained and systematic attempt to remove this scandal in one way or another.

‘If any one asks me what I mean by, or how I define, sufficient scientific proof of thought-reading, clairvoyance, or the phenomena called Spiritualistic, I should ask to be allowed to evade the difficulties of determining in the abstract what constitutes adequate evidence. What I mean by *sufficient evidence* is evidence that will convince the scientific world, and for that we obviously require a good deal more than we have so far obtained. I do not mean that some effect in this direction has not been produced: if that were so we could not hope to do much. I think that something has been done; that the advocates of obstinate incredulity—I mean the incredulity that waives the whole affair aside as undeserving of any attention from rational beings—feel their case to be not *prima facie* so strong now as it was.

‘Thirty years ago it was thought that want of scientific culture was an adequate explanation of the vulgar belief in mesmerism and table-turning. Then, as one man of scientific repute after another came forward with the results of individual investigation, there was a quite ludicrous ingenuity exercised in finding reasons for

discrediting his scientific culture. He was said to be an amateur, not a professional; or a specialist without adequate generality of view and training; or a mere discoverer not acquainted with the strict methods of experimental research; or he was not a Fellow of the Royal Society, or if he was it was by an unfortunate accident. We must not expect any decisive effect in the direction at which we primarily aim, on the common sense of mankind, from any single piece of evidence, however complete it has been made. Scientific incredulity has been so long in growing, and has so many and so strong roots, that we shall only kill it, if we are able to kill it at all as regards any of those questions, by burying it alive under a heap of facts. We must keep 'pegging away,' as Lincoln said; we must accumulate fact upon fact, and add experiment upon experiment, and, I should say, not wrangle too much with incredulous outsiders about the conclusiveness of any one, but trust to the mass of evidence for conviction. The highest degree of demonstrative force that we can obtain out of any single record of investigation is, of course, limited by the trustworthiness of the investigator. We have done all that we can when the critic has nothing left to allege except that the investigator is in the trick. But when he has nothing else left to allege he will allege that.

"We shall, I hope, make a point of bringing no evidence before the public until we have got it to this pitch of cogency."

To many enthusiasts outside and to some of those inside the Society—who, through long acquaintance with the phenomena under investigation, were already thoroughly convinced of their genuine character—this attitude on the part of the founders and leaders of the Society for Psychical Research always seemed wrong-headed, and sometimes proved irritating to an almost unbearable degree. The hostility of the outside world and of orthodox science to the investigation, though at times fierce and scornful, and always significant

and deserving of attention, has been mild, or at any rate intermittent, compared with the bitter and fairly continuous diatribes which at one time issued from the spiritualistic press against the slow and ponderous and hypercritical attitude of those responsible for the working of the Society.

It has been called a society for the suppression of facts, for the wholesale imputation of imposture, for the discouragement of the sensitive, and for the repudiation of every revelation of the kind which was said to be pressing itself upon humanity from the regions of light and knowledge.

Well, we have had to stand this buffeting, as well as the more ponderous blows inflicted by the other side ; and it was hardly necessary to turn the cheek to the smiter, since in an attitude of face-forward progress the buffets were sure to come with fair impartiality ; greater frequency on the one side making up for greater strength on the other.

### REPLY TO RELIGIOUS CRITICS

There is a persistent class of objector, however, whose attacks are made more in sorrow than in anger, and whose earnest remonstrances are thus sympathetically parried by the founders of the Society :—

“ One word in reference to another objection, which proceeds from a different quarter. There are not a few religious persons who see no reason to doubt our alleged facts, but who regard any experimental investigation of them as wrong, because they must be the work either of the devil or of familiar spirits, with whom the Bible forbids us to have dealings . . . What we should urge upon our religious friends is that their scruples have really no place in the present stage of our investigation, when the question before us is whether certain phenomena are to be referred to the agency of Spirits at all, even as a ‘ working hypothesis.’ . . .

Many of us, I think, will be amply content if we can only bring this first stage of our investigation to something like a satisfactory issue ; we do not look further ahead ; and we will leave it for those who may come after to deal with any moral problems that may possibly arise when this first stage is passed.

“ There are persons who believe themselves to have certain knowledge on the most important matters on which we are seeking evidence, who do not doubt that they have received communications from an unseen world of spirits, but who think that such communications should be kept as sacred mysteries and not exposed to be scrutinised in the mood of cold curiosity which they conceive to belong to science. Now we do not wish to appear intrusive ; at the same time we are anxious not to lose through mere misunderstanding any good opportunities for investigation : and I therefore wish to assure such persons that we do not approach these matters in any light or trivial spirit, but with an ever-present sense of the vast importance of the issues involved, and with every desire to give reverence wherever reverence is found to be due. But we feel bound to begin by taking these experiences, however important and however obscure, as a part of the great aggregate which we call Nature ; and we must ascertain carefully and systematically their import, their laws and causes, before we can rationally take up any definite attitude of mind with regard to them. The unknown or uncommon is not in itself an object of reverence ; there is no sacredness in the mere limitations of our knowledge.

“ This, then, is what we mean by a scientific spirit ; that we approach the subject without prepossessions, but with a single-minded desire to bring within the realm of orderly and accepted knowledge what now appears as a chaos of individual beliefs.”

To prevent misconception, it must be expressly stated that Membership of the Society does not imply the acceptance of any particular explanation of the phenomena investigated, nor any belief as to the operation, in the physical world, of forces other

than those recognised by Physical Science. All seriously interested people are welcome as members, provided they have no selfish or commercial ends to serve by seeking to join. Their interest, and in a minor degree their subscription, tend to promote the object we have in view. Moreover, they themselves have the benefit of a good consulting library in addition to becoming recipients of the Society's contemporary publications. Merely superstitious and emotional people would find themselves out of place at our meetings, but otherwise we do not seek to be exclusive. It is a kind of work to which any fair-minded and honest person can, as opportunity offers, contribute his or her share.

Members and Associates are asked to remember that the name of the Society is not The Psychical Society, nor any of the other popular appellations applied to it, but *The Society for Psychical Research*; its present home is 20, Hanover Square, and its abbreviated designation the S.P.R.

## CHAPTER II

### PRACTICAL WORK OF THE SOCIETY

IN the three earliest years of the present century it fell to my lot to occupy the Presidential Chair of the Society for Psychical Research and to give an Address each year. One of those Addresses—the one for 1903—dealt with the lines of profitable work which seemed at that time to be opening before us; and, since the general nature of our investigation is there referred to in a preliminary manner, it is useful to reproduce it here as an introduction to the more detailed records which follow.

Our primary aim is to be a Scientific Society, to conduct our researches and to record our results in an accurate and scientific manner, so as to set an example of careful work in regions where it has been the exception rather than the rule, and to be a trustworthy guide to the generation of workers who shall follow.

To be scientific does not mean to be infallible, but it means being clear and honest, and as exact as we know



how to be. In difficult investigations pioneers have always made some mistakes, they have no immediate criterion or infallible touchstone to distinguish the more true from the less true, but if they record their results with anxious care and scrupulous honesty and painstaking precision, their mistakes are only less valuable to the next generation than their partially true generalisations ; and sometimes it turns out, after a century or so, that mistakes made by early pioneers were no such thorough errors as had been thought, that they had an element of truth in them all the time, as if discoverers were endowed with a kind of prophetic insight whereby they caught a glimpse of theories and truths which it would take several generations of workers to disencumber and bring clearly to light.

Suppose, however, that their errors were real ones, the record of their work is just as important to future navigators as it is to have the rocks and shoals of a channel mapped out and buoyed. It is work which must be done. The great ship passing straight to its destination is enabled to attain this directness and speed by the combined labours of a multitude of workers, some obscure and forgotten, some distinguished and remembered, but few of them able to realise its stately passage. So it is also with every great erection,—much of the work is indirect and hidden ;—the Forth Bridge stands upon piers sunk below the water-mark by the painful and long continued labours of Italian workmen in “ caissons ” full of compressed and heated air.

The study of specifically Natural knowledge was fostered and promoted by the recognition in the reign of Charles II. of a body of enthusiasts who, during the disturbed but hopeful era of the Commonwealth, had met together to discuss problems of scientific interest ; and to-day The Royal Society is among the dignified institutions of our land, taking all branches of Natural Philosophy and Natural History—the Physical Sciences and the Biological Sciences—under its wing.

Us it does not recognise ; but then neither does it recognise Mental and Moral Philosophy, or Ethics, or

Psychology, or History, or any part of a great region of knowledge which has hitherto been regarded as outside the pale of the Natural Sciences.

It is for us to introduce our subjects within that pale, if it turns out that there they properly belong ; and if not, it is for us to do pioneer work and take our place by the side of that group of Societies whose object is the recognition and promotion of work in the mental, the psychological, the philosophical direction, until the day for unification shall arrive.

Half knowledge sees divisions and emphasises barriers, delights in classification into genera and species, affixes labels, and studies things in groups. And all this work is of the utmost practical value and is essentially necessary. That the day will come when barriers shall be broken down, when species shall be found to shade off into one another, when continuity and not classification shall be the dominant feature, may be anticipated by all ; but we have no power of hastening the day except by taking our place in the workshop and doing our assigned quota ; still less do we gain any advantage by pretending that the day of unification has arrived while as yet its dawn is still in the future.

### POPULAR MISTRUST OF SCIENCE, AND ITS REMEDY

Our primary aim is to be a Scientific Society, doing pioneering and foundation work in a new and not yet incorporated plot on which future generations may build, and making as few mistakes as we can reasonably contrive by the exercise of great care. We are not a literary society, though we have had men of letters among our guides and leaders ; and we are not a religious society, though some of the members take an interest in our subject because it seems to them to have a bearing on their religious convictions or hopes. I will say a few words on both these points.

First, our relations to literature.

The name of Francis Bacon is a household word in

the history of English scientific ideas. I do not mean in the recent, and as it seems to me comic, aspect, that he wrote everything that was written in the Elizabethan era (a matter to which I wish to make no reference one way or the other, for it is completely off my path). But, before that hare was started, his name was weighty and familiar in the history of English scientific ideas; and it is instructive to ask why. Was he a man of Science? No. Did he make discoveries? No. Do scientific men trace back their ancestry to him? No. To Isaac Newton they trace it back, to Gilbert, to Roger Bacon, speaking for those in England; but of Francis Bacon they know next to nothing. Outside England all the world traces its scientific ancestry to Newton, to Descartes, to Galileo, to Kepler; but of Francis Bacon scientific men outside England have scarcely heard, save as a man of letters. Yet the progress of science owes much to him. All unconsciously scientific men owe to him a great debt. Why?

Because he perceived afar off the oncoming of the scientific wave, and because he was able, in language to which men would listen, to herald and welcome its advent.

Scientifically he was an amateur; but he was an enthusiast who, with splendid eloquence, with the fire of genius, and with great forensic skill, was able to impress his generation, and not his own generation alone, with some idea of the dignity and true place of science, and to make it possible for the early pioneers of the Royal Society to pursue their labours unimpeded by persecution, and to gain some sort of recognition even from general and aristocratic Society.

For remember that the term "science" was not always respectable. To early ears it sounded almost as the term witchcraft or magic sounds, it was a thing from which to warn young people; it led to atheism and to many other abominations. It was an unholy prying into the secrets of Nature which were meant to be hid from our eyes; it was a thing against which the Church resolutely set its face, a thing for which it was ready

if need be to torture or to burn those unlucky men of scientific genius who were born before their time. I mean no one Church in particular : I mean the religious world generally. Science was a thing allied to heresy, a thing to hold aloof from, to shudder at, and to attribute to the devil. All which treatment that great and eminent pioneer, Roger Bacon, experienced at the University of Oxford ; because the time was not yet ripe.

How came it that a little later, in the days of the Stuarts, the atmosphere was so different from that prevalent in the days of the Plantagenets ? Doubtless the age of Elizabeth, the patriotism aroused by the Armada and by the great discoveries in geography, had had their vivifying effect ; and the same sort of originality of thought which did not scruple to arraign a king for high treason likewise ventured to set orthodoxy at defiance, and to experiment upon and investigate openly all manner of natural facts. But, in partial contradiction to the expressed opinion of some men of science, I am disposed to agree to a considerable extent with the popular British view that the result was largely due to the influence of the writings of Francis Bacon. He had accustomed scholars and literary men to the possibilities and prerogatives of scientific inquiry, he had emphasised the importance and the dignity of experiment, and it is to his writings that the rapid spread of scientific ideas, discovered as always by a few, became acceptable to and spread among the many.

Do not let us suppose, however, that the recognition of science was immediate and universal. Dislike of it, and mistrust of the consequences of scientific inquiry—especially in geology and anthropology,—persisted well into the Victorian era, and is not wholly extinct at the present day. Quite apart from antipathy to investigation into affairs of the mind—which is unpopular and mistrusted still, so that good people are still found who will attribute anything unusual to the devil, and warn young people from it,—there is some slight trace of lingering prejudice even against the orthodox sciences of Chemistry and Physics and Biology. They have

achieved their foothold, they are regarded with respect—people do not disdain to make money by means of them when the opportunity is forthcoming—but they are not really liked. They are admitted to certain schools on sufferance, as an inferior grade of study suited to the backward and the ignorant; they are not regarded with affection and enthusiasm as revelations of Divine working, to be reverently studied, nor as subjects in which the youth of a nation may be wholesomely and solidly trained.

Very well, still more is the time not quite ripe for our subject; pioneers must expect hard knocks, the mind of a people can change only slowly. Until the mind of a people is changed, new truths born before their time must suffer the fate of other untimely births; and the prophet who preaches them must expect to be mistaken for a useless fanatic, of whom every age has always had too many, and must be content to be literally or metaphorically put to death, as part of the process for the regeneration of the world.

The dislike and mistrust and disbelief in the validity or legitimacy of psychical inquiry is familiar: the dislike of the Natural Sciences is almost defunct. It survives, undoubtedly—they are not liked, though they are tolerated—and I am bound to say that part of the surviving dislike is due not alone to heredity and imbibed ideas, but to the hasty and intolerant and exuberant attitude of some men of science, who, knowing themselves to be reformers,—feeling that they have a grain of seed-corn to plant and water,—have not always been content to go about their business in a calm and conciliatory spirit, but have sought to hurry things on by a rough-shod method of progression, which may indeed attain its ends, but gives some pain in the process, and perhaps achieves results less admirable than those which might have been attained by the exercise of a little patience, a little more perception of the point of view of others, a little more imagination, a little more of that recognition of the insignificance of trifles and of the transitory character of full-blown fashions which is

called a sense of humour, a little cultivation of the historic sense. In a word, a little more general education.

But this is a digression. I admit the importance of Francis Bacon in the history of the development of the national recognition of the natural sciences in England; and I wish to suggest that in the history of the psychical sciences we too have had a Bacon,—and one not long departed from us. It is possible that in F. W. H. Myers's two posthumous volumes we have a book which posterity will regard as a *Novum Organon*. History does not repeat itself, and I would not draw the parallel too close. It may be that posterity will regard Myers as much more than that,—as a philosophic pioneer who has not only secured recognition for, but has himself formulated some of the philosophic unification of, a mass of obscure and barely recognised human faculty,—thereby throwing a light on the meaning of "personality" which may survive the test of time. It may be so, but that is for no one living to say. Posterity alone, by aid of the experience and further knowledge which time brings, is able to make a judgment of real value on such a topic as that. I will content myself with drawing attention to his comprehensive scheme of Vital Faculty now somewhat buried in the second volume of *Human Personality*, as section 926A, pages 505—554.

Meanwhile it is for us to see that time does bring this greater knowledge and experience. For time *alone* is impotent. Millions of years passed on this planet, during which the amount of knowledge acquired was small or nil. Up to the sixteenth century, even, scientific progress was, at the best, slow. Recently it has been rapid,—none too rapid, but rapid. The rate of advance depends upon the activities and energies of each generation, and upon the organisation and machinery which it has inherited from its immediate forbears.

The pioneers who created the S.P.R. have left it in trust with us to hand it on to future generations, an efficient and powerful machine for the spread of scientific

truth,—an engine for the advancement of science in a direction overgrown with thickets of popular superstition, intermixed with sandy and barren tracts of resolute incredulity. We have to steer our narrow way between the Scylla of stony minds with no opening in our direction, and the Charybdis of easy and omnivorous acceptance of every straw and waif, whether of truth or falsehood, that may course with the currents of popular superstition.

Now I know that some few persons are impatient of such an investigation, and decline to see any need for it. They feel that if they have evidence enough to justify their own belief, further inquiry is superfluous. These have not the scientific spirit, they do not understand the meaning of "law." A fact isolated and alone, joined by no link to the general body of knowledge, is almost valueless. If what they believe is really a fact, they may depend upon it that it has its place in the cosmic scheme, a place which can be detected by human intelligence; and its whole bearing and meaning can gradually be made out.

Moreover, their attitude is selfish. Being satisfied themselves, they will help us no more. But real knowledge, like real wealth of any kind, cannot be wrapped up in a napkin; it pines for reproduction, for increase: "how am I straitened till it be accomplished." The missionary spirit, in some form or other, is inseparably associated with all true and worthy knowledge. Think of a man who, having made a discovery in Astronomy, —seen a new planet, or worked out a new law,—should keep it to himself and gloat over it in private. It would be inhuman and detestable miserliness; even in a thing like that, of no manifest importance to mankind. There would be some excuse for a man who lived so much in advance of his time that, like Galileo with his newly invented and applied telescope, he ran a danger of rebuffs and persecution for the publication of discoveries. But even so, it is his business to brave this and tell out what he knows; still more is it his business so to act upon the mind of his generation as to convert it gradually

to the truth, and lead his fellows to accept what now they reject.

Those who believe themselves the repositories of any form of divine truth should realise their responsibility. They are bound in honour to take such steps as may wisely cause its perception and recognition by the mass of mankind. They are not bound to harangue the crowd from the nearest platform: that might be the very way to retard progress and throw back the acceptance of their doctrine. The course to pursue may be much more indirect than that. The way may be hard and long, but to the possessor of worldly means it is far easier than to another. If the proper administration of his means can conduce to the progress of science, and to the acceptance by the mass of mankind of important and vivifying knowledge of which it is now ignorant, then surely the path lies plain.

#### ARGUMENTUM AD DIGNITATEM

Still however there are persons who urge that a study of occult phenomena is beneath the dignity of science, and that nothing will be gained of any use to mankind by inquisitiveness regarding the unusual and the lawless, or by gravely attending to the freaks of the unconscious or semi-conscious mind.

"But—as Myers and Gurney said long ago in *Phantasms of the Living*—it is needful to point out yet once more, how plausible the reasons for discouraging some novel research have often seemed to be, while yet the advance of knowledge has rapidly shown the futility and folly of such discouragement.

"It was the Father of Science himself who was the first to circumscribe her activity. Socrates expressly excluded from the range of exact inquiry all such matters as the movements and nature of the sun and moon. He wished—and as he expressed his wish it seemed to have all the cogency of absolute wisdom—



that men's minds should be turned to the ethical and political problems which truly concerned them,—not wasted in speculation on things unknowable—things useless even could they be known.

“In a kindred spirit, though separated from Socrates by the whole result of that physical science which Socrates had deprecated, we find a great modern systematiser of human thought again endeavouring to direct the scientific impulse towards things serviceable to man; to divert it from things remote, unknowable, and useless if known [such as the fixed stars]. What then, in Comte's view, are in fact the limits of man's actual home and business? the bounds within which he may set himself to learn all he can, assured that all will serve to inform his conscience and guide his life? It is the solar system which has become for the French philosopher what the street and market-place of Athens were for the Greek.”

I need not say that Comte's prohibition has been altogether neglected. No frontier of scientific demarcation has been established between Neptune and Sirius, between Uranus and Aldebaran. Our knowledge of the fixed stars increases yearly; and it would be rash to maintain that human conduct is not already influenced by the conception thus gained of the unity and immensity of the heavens.

“The criticisms which have met us, from the side sometimes of scientific, sometimes of religious orthodoxy, have embodied, in modernised phraseology, nearly every well-worn form of timid protest, or obscurantist demurrer, with which the historians of science have been accustomed to give piquancy to their long tale of discovery and achievement.

“Sometimes we are told that we are inviting the old theological spirit to encroach once more on the domain of Science; sometimes that we are endeavouring to lay the impious hands of Science upon the mysteries of Religion. Sometimes we are informed that competent savants have already fully explored the field which we

propose for our investigation. Sometimes that no respectable man of science would condescend to meddle with such a reeking mass of fraud and hysteria. Sometimes we are pitied as laborious triflers who prove some infinitely small matter with mighty trouble and pains; sometimes we are derided as attempting the solution of gigantic problems by slight and superficial means."

### USE OF CONTINUED INVESTIGATION

But the question is reiterated, Why investigate that of which we are sure? Why conduct experiments in hypnotism or in telepathy? Why seek to confirm that of which we already have conviction? Why value well-evidenced narratives of apparitions at times of death or catastrophe, when so many have already been collected in *Phantasms of the Living*, and when careful scrutiny has proved that they cannot be the result of chance coincidence?<sup>1</sup> There is a quite definite answer to this question—an answer at which I have already hinted—which I wish to commend to the consideration of those who feel this difficulty or ask this sort of question.

The business of Science is not belief but investigation. Belief is both the prelude to and the outcome of knowledge. If a fact or a theory has had a *prima facie* case made out for it, subsequent investigation is necessary to examine and extend it.

Effective knowledge concerning anything can only be the result of long-continued investigation; belief in the possibility of a fact is only the very first step. Until there is some sort of tentative belief in the reasonable possibility of a fact there is no investigation,—the scientific Priest and Levite have other business, and pass by on the other side. And small blame to them: they cannot stop to investigate everything that may be lying by the roadside. If they had been sure that it was a fellow creature in legitimate distress they would have

<sup>1</sup> See the Report of Professor Sidgwick's Committee *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. x., p. 394.

acted differently. Belief of a tentative kind will ensure investigation, not by all but by some of the scientific travellers along the road; but investigation is the prelude to action, and action is a long process. Some one must attend to the whole case and see it through. Others, more pressed for time, may find it easier to subscribe their "two pence" to an endowment fund, and so give indirect but valuable assistance.

The object of investigation is the ascertainment of law, and to this process there is no end. What, for instance, is the object of observing and recording earthquakes, and arranging delicate instruments to detect the slightest indication of earth tremor? Every one knows that earthquakes exist, there is no scepticism to overcome in their case; even people who have never experienced them are quite ready to believe in their occurrence. Investigation into earthquakes and the whole of the motile occurrences in the earth's crust, is not in the least for the purpose of confirming faith, but solely for the better understanding of the conditions and nature of the phenomena; in other words, for the ascertainment of law.

So it is in every branch of science. At first among new phenomena careful observation of fact is necessary, as when Tycho Brahé made measurements of the motion of the planets and accumulated a store of careful observations. Then came the era of hypothesis, and Kepler waded through guess after guess, testing them pertinaciously to see if any one of them would fit all the facts: the result of his strenuous life-work being the three laws which for all time bear his name. And then came the majestic deductive epoch of Newton, welding the whole into one comprehensive system; subsequently to be enriched and extended by the labours of Lagrange and Laplace; after which the current of scientific inquiry was diverted for a time into other less adequately explored channels.

For not at all times is everything equally ripe for inquiry. There is a phase, or it may be a fashion, even in Science. I spoke of geographical exploration as the

feature of Elizabeth's time. Astronomical inquiry succeeded it. Optics and Chemistry were the dominating sciences of the early part of the nineteenth century, Heat and Geology of the middle, Electricity and Biology of the later portion. Not yet has our branch of psychology had its phase of popularity ; nor am I anxious that it should be universally fashionable. It is a subject of special interest, and therefore perhaps of special danger. In that respect it is like other studies of the operations of mind, like a scientific enumeration of the phenomena of religion for instance, like the study of anything which in its early stages looks mysterious and incomprehensible. Training and some admixture of other studies are necessary for its healthy investigation. The day will come when the science will put off its foggy aspect, bewildering to the novice, and become easier for the less well-balanced and more ordinarily-equipped explorer. At present it is like a mountain shrouded in mist, whose sides offer but little secure foothold,—where climbing, though possible, is difficult and dangerous.

The assuring of ourselves as to facts is one of our duties, and it is better to hesitate too long over a truth than to welcome an error, for a false gleam may lead us far astray unless it is soon detected.

Another of our duties is the making and testing of hypotheses, so as gradually to make a map of the district and be able to explain it to future travellers. We have to combine the labours of Tycho with those of Kepler, and thus prepare the way for a future Newton ; who has not yet appeared above the psychical horizon.

His advent must depend upon how far we of this and the next few generations are faithful to our trust, how far we work ourselves, and by our pecuniary means enable others to work ; and I call upon those who are simultaneously blessed with this world's goods and likewise inspired with confidence in the truth and value of mental and spiritual knowledge, to bethink themselves whether, either in their lifetime or by their wills, they cannot contribute to the world's progress in a beneficent

way, so as to enable humanity to rise to a greater height of aspiration and even of religion ;—as they will if they are enabled to start with a substantial foundation of solid scientific fact on which to erect their edifice of faith.

### HINT TO INVESTIGATORS

To return to the more immediate and special aspect of our work : one of the things I want to impress upon all readers, especially upon those who are gifted with a faculty for receiving impressions which are worth recording, is that too much care cannot be expended in getting the record exact. Exact in every particular, especially as regards the matter of *time*. In recording a vision or an audition or some other impression corresponding to some event elsewhere, there is a dangerous tendency to try to coax the facts to fit some half-fledged preconceived theory and to make the coincidence in point of time exact.

Such distortions of truth are misleading and useless. What we want to know is exactly how the things occurred, not how the impressionist would have liked them to occur, or how he thinks they ought to have occurred. If people attach importance to their own predilections concerning events in the Universe, they can be set forth in a footnote for the guidance of any one who hereafter may think of starting a Universe on his own account : but such speculations are of no interest to us who wish to study and understand the Universe as it is. If the event preceded the impression, by all means let us know it,—and perhaps some one may be able to detect a meaning in the time-interval, when a great number of similar instances are compared, hereafter. If the impression preceded the event, by all means let us know that too, and never let the observation be suppressed from a ridiculous idea that such anticipation is impossible. Nor let us exclude well-attested physical phenomena from historical record, on any similar prejudice of impossibility. We want to *learn*

what is possible, not to have minds made up beforehand and distort or blink the facts to suit our preconceptions.

With respect to the important subject of possible prediction, on which our ideas as to the ultimate nature of time will so largely depend, every precaution should be taken to put far from us the temptation or the possibility of improving the original record after the fact to which it refers has occurred, if it ever does occur ; and to remember that though we have done nothing of the sort, and are in all respects honest, and known to be honest and truthful, yet the contrary may be surmised by posterity or by strangers or foreigners who did not know us ; and even our friends may fancy that we did more than we were aware of, in some hypothetical access of somnambulic or automatic trance. Automatic writers, for instance, must be assumed open to this suspicion, unless they take proper precautions and deposit copies of their writings in some inaccessible and responsible custody ; because the essence of their phenomenon is that the hand writes what they themselves are not aware of, and so it is an easy step for captious critics to maintain that it may also have supplemented or amended, in some way of which they were likewise not aware.

The establishment of cases of real prediction, not mere inference, is so vital and crucial a test of something not yet recognised by science that it is worth every effort to make its evidence secure.

Another thing on which I should value experiments is the detection of slight traces of telepathic power in quite normal persons,—in the average man for instance, or, rather more likely perhaps, in the average child. The power of receiving telepathic impressions *may* be a rare faculty existing only in a few individuals, and in them fully developed ; but it is equally possible, and, if one may say so, more likely, that what we see in them is but an intensification of a power which exists in every one as a germ or nucleus. If such should be the fact, it behoves us to know it ; and its recognition would do more to spread a general belief in the fact of telepathy

—a belief by no means as yet universally or even widely spread—than almost anything else.

### BEARING ON ALLIED SUBJECTS

There are many topics on which I might speak : one is the recent advance in our knowledge of the nature of the atom, and the discovery of facts concerning the Ether and Matter which I think must have some bearing, —some to me at present quite unknown bearing,—on the theory of what are called “ physical phenomena ” ; but it is hardly necessary to call the attention of educated persons to the intense interest of this most recent purely scientific subject.

On another topic I might say a few words, viz., on the ambiguity clinging round the phrase “ action at a distance,” in connection with telepathy. Physicists deny action at a distance, at least most of them do,—I do for one ;—at the same time I admit telepathy. Therefore it is supposed I necessarily assume that telepathy must be conducted by an etherial process analogous to the transmission of waves. That is, however, a *non-sequitur*. The phrase “ action at a distance ” is a technical one. Its denial signifies that no physical force is exerted save through a medium. There must either be a projectile from A to B, or a continuous medium of some kind extending from A to B, if A exerts force upon B, or otherwise influences it by a physical process.

But what about a psychical process ? There is no such word in physics ; the term is in that connection meaningless. A physicist can make no assertion on it one way or the other. If A mesmerises B, or if A makes an apparition of himself appear to B, or if A conveys a telepathic impression to B ; is a medium necessary then ? As a physicist I do not know : these are not processes I understand. They may not be physical processes at all.

Take it further :—A thinks of B, or A prays to B, or A worships B.—Is a medium necessary for these things ? Absolute ignorance ! The question is probably meaning-

less and absurd. Spiritual and psychical events do not enter into the scheme of Physics ; and when a physicist denies " action at a distance " he is speaking of things he is competent to deal with,—of light and sound and electricity and magnetism and cohesion and gravitation,—he is not, or should not be, denying anything psychical or spiritual at all. All the physical things, he asserts, necessitate a medium ; but beyond that he is silent. If telepathy is an etherial process, as soon as it is proved to be an etherial process, it will come into the realm of physics ; till then it stays outside.

There is one important topic on which I have not yet spoken,—I mean the bearing of our inquiry on religion. It is a large subject and one too nearly trenching on the region of emotion to be altogether suitable for consideration by a scientific Society. Yet every science has its practical applications,—though they are not part of the science, they are its legitimate outcome,—and the value of the science to humanity must be measured in the last resort by the use which humanity can make of it. To the enthusiast, knowledge for its own sake, without ulterior ends, may be enough,—and if there were none of this spirit in the world we should be poorer than we are ;—but for the bulk of mankind this is too high, too arid a creed, and people in general must see just enough practical outcome to have faith that there may be yet more.

That our researches will ultimately have some bearing, some meaning, for the science of theology, I do not doubt. What that bearing may be I can only partly tell. I have indicated in *Man and the Universe*, Chapter II. called " The Reconciliation," part of what I feel on the subject, and I have gone as far in that article as I feel entitled to go. We seek to unravel the nature and hidden powers of man ; and a fuller understanding of the attributes of humanity cannot but have some influence on our theory of Divinity itself.

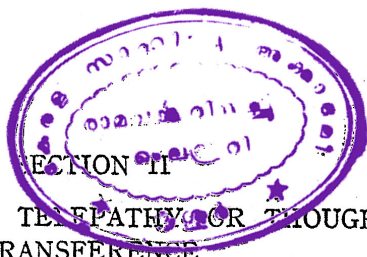
If any scientific Society is worthy of encouragement and support it should surely be this. If there is any



object worthy of patient and continued attention, it is surely these great and pressing problems of *whence*, *what*, and *whither*, that have occupied the attention of Prophet and Philosopher since human history began. The discovery of a new star, of a marking on Mars, of a new element, or of a new extinct animal or plant, is interesting: surely the discovery of a new human faculty is interesting too. Already the discovery of "telepathy" constitutes the first-fruits of this Society's work, and it has laid the way open to the discovery of much more. Our aim is nothing less than the investigation and better comprehension of human faculty, human personality, and human destiny.



END OF SECTION I



## EXPERIMENTAL TELEPATHY OR THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE

### CHAPTER III

#### SOME EARLY EXPERIMENTS IN THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE

I AM not attempting a history of the subject ; and for the observations of Sir W. Barrett and others in the experimental transference of ideas or images from one person to another I must refer students to the first volume of the *Proceedings* of the Society, where a number of facsimile reproductions of transferred diagrams and pictures, which are of special interest, will also be found. Prof. Barrett had experimented in conjunction with Mr. William de Morgan so long ago as 1870-73, and he endeavoured to make a communication on the subject to the British Association in 1876 ; but the subject was unwelcome or the attempt premature, and he naturally encountered rebuff. There was some correspondence on the subject in *Nature* in 1881, and an article in *The Nineteenth Century* for June 1882. All I shall do here is to describe some later observations and experiments of my own.

Suffice it to say that the leading members of the Society for Psychical Research—actuated in the first instance largely by Prof. Barrett's report—investigated the matter, and gradually by pertinacious experiment became convinced of the reality of thought-transference, —taking due precaution, as their experience enlarged, against the extraordinary ingenuity and subtle possibility

of code signalling, and discriminating carefully between the genuine phenomenon and the thought-reading or rather muscle-reading exhibitions, with actual or partial contact, which at one time were much in vogue.

"Before coming to our conclusion as to Thought-transference," says Prof. Sidgwick, "we considered carefully the arguments brought forward for regarding cases of so-called 'thought-reading' as due to involuntary indications apprehended through the ordinary senses; and we came to the conclusion that the ordinary experiments, where contact was allowed, could be explained by the hypothesis of unconscious sensibility to involuntary muscular pressure. Hence we have always attached special importance to experiments in which contact was excluded; with regard to which this particular hypothesis is clearly out of court."

My own first actual experience of Thought-transference, or experimental Telepathy, was obtained in the years 1883 and 1884 at Liverpool, when I was invited by Mr. Malcolm Guthrie of that city to join in an investigation which he was conducting with the aid of one or two persons who had turned out to be sensitive, from among the employees of the large drapery firm of George Henry Lee & Co.

A large number of these experiments had been conducted before I was asked to join, throughout the Spring and Autumn of 1883, but it is better for me to adhere strictly to my own experience and to relate only those experiments over which I had control. Accordingly I reproduce here a considerable part of my short paper on the subject, originally published in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, vol. ii.

Most of these experiments were confirmations of the kind of thing that had been observed by other experimenters. But one experiment which I tried was definitely novel, and, as it seems to me, important; since it clearly showed that when two agents are acting, each contributes

to the effect, and that the result is due, not to one alone, but to both combined. The experiment is thus described by me in the columns of *Nature*, vol. xxx., page 145 :—

#### AN EXPERIMENT IN THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE

Those of your readers who are interested in the subject of thought-transference, now being investigated, may be glad to hear of a little experiment which I recently tried here. The series of experiments was originated and carried on in this city by Mr. Malcolm Guthrie, and he has prevailed on me, on Dr. Herdman, and on one or two other more or less scientific witnesses, to be present on several occasions, critically to examine the conditions, and to impose any fresh ones that we thought desirable. I need not enter into particulars, but I will just say that the conditions under which apparent transference of thought occurs from one or more persons, steadfastly thinking, to another in the same room blindfold and wholly disconnected from the others, seem to me absolutely satisfactory, and such as to preclude the possibility of conscious collusion on the one hand or unconscious muscular indication on the other.

One evening last week—after two thinkers, or agents, had been several times successful in instilling the idea of some object or drawing, at which they were looking, into the mind of the blindfold person, or percipient—I brought into the room a double opaque sheet of thick paper with a square drawn on one side and a St. Andrew's cross or X on the other, and silently arranged it between the two agents so that each looked on one side without any notion of what was on the other. The percipient was not informed in any way that a novel modification was being made ; and, as usual, there was no contact of any sort or kind,—a clear space of several feet existing between each of the three people. I thought that by this variation I should decide whether one of the two agents was more active than the other ; or, supposing them about equal, whether two ideas in

two separate minds could be fused into one by the percipient.

In a very short time the percipient made the following remarks, every one else being silent : "The thing won't keep still." 'I seem to see things moving about.' 'First I see a thing up there, and then one down there.' 'I can't see either distinctly.' The object was then hidden, and the percipient was told to take off the bandage and to draw the impression in her mind on a sheet of paper. She drew a square, and then said, 'There was the other thing as well,' and drew a cross inside the square from corner to corner, saying afterwards, 'I don't know what made me put it inside.'

The experiment is no more conclusive as evidence than fifty others that I have seen at Mr. Guthrie's, but it seems to me somewhat interesting that two minds should produce a disconnected sort of impression on the mind of the percipient, quite different from the single impression which we had usually obtained when two agents were both looking at the same thing. Once, for instance [to take a nearly corresponding case under those conditions], when the object was a rude drawing of the main lines in a Union Jack, the figure was reproduced by the percipient as a whole without misgiving ; except, indeed, that she expressed a doubt as to whether its middle horizontal line were present or not, and ultimately omitted it

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5 June 1884

It is preferable thus to quote the original record and contemporary mode of publication of an experiment, so as to avoid the risk either of minimising or over-emphasising the cogency of the circumstances. But I wish to say strongly that the experiment was quite satisfactory, and that no reasonable doubt of its validity has been felt by me from that time to this.

## REPORT ON THE MAIN SERIES

I now proceed to give my report on the whole series of experiments :—

In reporting on the experiments conducted by me, at the invitation and with the appliances of Mr. Guthrie, I wish to say that I had every opportunity of examining and varying the minute conditions of the phenomena, so as to satisfy myself of their genuine and objective character, in the same way as one is accustomed to satisfy oneself as to the truth and genuineness of any ordinary physical fact. If I had merely witnessed facts as a passive spectator I should not publicly report upon them. So long as one is bound to accept imposed conditions and merely witness what goes on, I have no confidence in my own penetration, and am perfectly sure that a conjurer could impose on me, possibly even to the extent of making me think that he was not imposing on me ; but when one has the control of the circumstances, can change them at will and arrange one's own experiments, one gradually acquires a belief in the phenomena observed quite comparable to that induced by the repetition of ordinary physical experiments.

I have no striking or new phenomenon to report, but only a few more experiments in the simplest and most elementary form of what is called Thought-transference ; though certainly what I have to describe falls under the head of " Thought-transference " proper, and is not explicable by the merely mechanical transfer of impressions, which is more properly described as muscle-reading.

In using the term " Thought-transference," I would ask to be understood as doing so for convenience, because the observed facts can conveniently be grouped under such a title ; but I would not be understood as implying any theory on the subject. It is a most dangerous thing to attempt to convey a theory by a phrase ; and to set forth a theory would require many words. As it is, the phrase describes correctly enough

what appears to take place, viz., that one person may, under favourable conditions, receive a faint impression of a thing which is strongly present in the mind, or thought, or sight, or sensorium of another person not in contact, and may be able to describe or draw it, more or less correctly. But how the transfer takes place, or whether there is any transfer at all, or what is the physical reality underlying the terms "mind," "consciousness," "impression," and the like; and whether this thing we call mind is located in the person, or in the space round him, or in both, or neither; whether indeed the term location, as applied to mind, is utter nonsense and simply meaningless,—concerning all these things I obtrude no hypothesis whatsoever. I may, however, be permitted to suggest a rough and crude analogy. That the brain is the organ of consciousness is patent, but that consciousness is located in the brain is what no psychologist ought to assert; for just as the energy of an electric charge, though apparently in the conductor, is not in the conductor, but in the space all round it; so it may be that the sensory consciousness of a person, though apparently located in his brain, may be conceived of as also existing like a faint echo in space, or in other brains, although these are ordinarily too busy and preoccupied to notice it.

The experiments which I have witnessed proceed in the following way. One person is told to keep in a perfectly passive condition, with a mind as vacant as possible; and to assist this condition the organs of sense are unexcited, the eyes being bandaged and silence maintained. It might be as well to shut out even the ordinary street hum by plugging the ears, but as a matter of fact this was not done.

A person thus kept passive is "the percipient." In the experiments I witnessed the percipient was a girl, one or other of two who had been accidentally found to possess the necessary power. Whether it is a common power or not I do not know. So far as I am aware comparatively few persons have tried. I myself tried, but failed abjectly. It was easy enough to picture things

to oneself, but they did not appear to be impressed on me from without, nor did any of them bear the least resemblance to the object in the agent's mind. (For instance, I said a pair of scissors instead of the five of diamonds,—and things like that.) Nevertheless, the person acting as percipient is in a perfectly ordinary condition, and can in no sense be said to be in a hypnotic state, unless this term be extended to include the emptiness of mind produced by blindfolding and silence. To all appearance a person in a brown study is far more hypnotised than the percipients I saw, who usually unbandaged their own eyes and chatted between successive experiments.

Another person sitting near the percipient, sometimes at first holding her hands but usually and ordinarily without any contact at all but with a distinct intervening distance, was told to think hard of a particular object, either a name, or a scene, or a thing, or of an object or drawing set up in a good light and in a convenient position for staring at. This person is "the agent" and has, on the whole, the hardest time of it. It is a most tiring and tiresome thing to stare at a letter, or a triangle, or a donkey, or a teaspoon, and to think of nothing else for the space of two or three minutes. Whether the term "thinking" can properly be applied to such barbarous concentration of mind as this I am not sure; its difficulty is of the nature of tediousness.

Very frequently more than one agent is employed, and when two or three people are in the room they are all told to think of the object more or less strenuously; the idea being that wandering thoughts in the neighbourhood certainly cannot help, and may possibly hinder, the clear transfer of impression. As regards the question whether when several agents are thinking, only one is doing the work, or whether all really produce some effect, a special experiment has led me to conclude that more than one agent can be active at the same time. We have some right therefore to conclude that several agents are probably more powerful than one, but that a confusedness of impression may sometimes be



produced by different agents attending to different parts or aspects of the object.

Most people seem able to act as agents, though some appear to do better than others. I can hardly say whether I am much good at it or not. I have not often tried alone, and in the majority of cases when I have tried I have failed ; on the other hand, I have once or twice succeeded. We have many times succeeded with agents quite disconnected from the percipient in ordinary life, and sometimes complete strangers to them. Mr. Birchall, the headmaster of the Birkdale Industrial School, frequently acted ; and the house physician at the Eye and Ear Hospital, Dr. Shears, had a successful experiment, acting alone, on his first and only visit. All suspicion of a pre-arranged code is thus rendered impossible, even to outsiders who are unable to witness the obvious fairness of all the experiments.

The object looked at by the agent is placed usually on a small black opaque wooden screen between the percipient and agents, but sometimes it is put on a larger screen behind the percipient. The objects were kept in an adjoining room and were selected and brought in by me, with all due precaution, after the percipient was blindfolded. I should say, however, that no reliance was placed on, or care taken in, the bandaging. It was merely done because the percipient preferred it to merely shutting the eyes. After remarkable experiments on blindfolding by members of the Society (see *Journal*, S.P.R., vol. i., p. 84), I certainly would not rely on any ordinary bandaging ; the opacity of the wooden screen on which the object was placed was the thing really depended on, and it was noticed that no mirrors or indistinct reflectors were present. The only surface at all suspicious was the polished top of the small table on which the opaque screen usually stood. But as the screen sloped backwards at a slight angle, it was impossible for the object on it to be thus mirrored. Moreover, sometimes I covered the table with paper, and often it was not used at all, but the object was placed on a screen or a settee behind the percipient ;

and one striking success was obtained with the object placed on a large drawing board, loosely swathed in a black silk college gown, with the percipient immediately behind the said drawing board and almost hidden by it.

As regards collusion and trickery, no one who has witnessed the absolutely genuine and artless manner in which the impressions are described, but has been perfectly convinced of the transparent honesty of purpose of all concerned. This, however, is not evidence to persons who have not been present, and to them I can only say that to the best of my scientific belief no collusion or trickery was possible under the varied circumstances of the experiments.

A very interesting question presents itself as to *what* is really transmitted, whether it is the idea or name of the object or whether it is the visual impression. To examine this I frequently drew things without any name—perfect irregular drawings. I am bound to say that these irregular and unnameable productions have always been rather difficult, though they have at times been imitated fairly well ; but it is not at all strange that a faint impression of an unknown object should be harder to grasp and reproduce than a faint impression of a familiar one, such as a letter, a common name, a teapot, or a pair of scissors. Moreover, in some very interesting cases the idea or name of the object was certainly the things transferred, and not the visual impression at all ; this specially happened with one of the two percipients ; and, therefore, probably in every case the fact of the object having a name would assist any faint impression of its appearance which might be received.

As to *aspect*, *i.e.* inversion or perversion,—so far as my experience goes it seems perfectly accidental whether the object will be drawn by the percipient in its actual position or in the inverted or perverted position. This is very curious if true, and would certainly not have been expected by me. Horizontal objects are never described as vertical, nor *vice versa* ; and slanting objects are usually drawn with the right amount of slant.

The two percipients are Miss R. and Miss E. Miss R. is the more prosaic, staid, and self-contained personage, and she it is who gets the best quasi-visual impression, but she is a bad drawer, and does not reproduce it very well. Miss E. is, I should judge, of a more sensitive temperament, seldom being able to preserve a strict silence for instance, and she it is who more frequently jumps to the idea or name of the object without being able so frequently to "see" it.

I was anxious to try both percipients at once, so as to compare their impressions, but I have not met with much success under these conditions, and usually therefore have had to try one at a time—the other being frequently absent or in another room, though also frequently present and acting as part or sole agent.

I once tried a double agent—that is, not two agents thinking of the same thing, but two agents each thinking of a different thing. A mixed and curiously double impression was thus produced and described by the percipient, and both the objects were correctly drawn. This experiment has been separately described, as it is important. See pages 28 and 37.

[N.B.—The actual drawings made in all the experiments, failures and successes alike are preserved intact by Mr. Guthrie.]

#### DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE EXPERIMENTS

In order to describe the experiments briefly I will put in parentheses everything said by me or by the agent, and in inverted commas all the remarks of the percipient. The first seven experiments are all that were made on one evening with the particular percipient, and they were rapidly performed.

##### A.—EXPERIMENTS WITH MISS R. AS PERCIPIENT

*First Agent, Mr. Birchall, holding hands. No one else present except myself.*

*Object—a blue square of silk.—(Now, it's going to be a colour ;*

ready.) "Is it green?" (No.) "It's something between green and blue. . . . Peacock." (What shape?) She drew a rhombus.

[*N.B.*—It is not intended to imply that this was a success by any means, and it is to be understood that it was only to make a start on the first experiment that so much help was given as is involved in saying "it's a colour." When they are simply told "it's an object," or, what is much the same, when nothing is said at all, the field for guessing is practically infinite. When no remark at starting is recorded none was made, except such an one as "Now we are ready,"—by myself.]

*Next object—a key on a black ground.*—(It's an object.) In a few seconds she said, "It's bright. . . . It looks like a key." Told to draw, she drew it just inverted.

*Next object—three gold studs in morocco case.*—"Is it yellow? . . . Something gold. . . . Something round. . . . A locket or a watch, perhaps." (Do you see more than one round?) "Yes, there seem to be more than one. . . . Are there three rounds? . . . Three rings." (What do they seem to be set in?) "Something bright like beads." [Evidently not understanding or attending to the question.] Told to unblindfold herself and draw, she drew the three rounds in a row quite correctly, and then sketched round them absently the outline of the case; which seemed, therefore, to have been apparent to her though she had not consciously attended to it. It was an interesting and striking experiment.

*Next object—a pair of scissors standing partly open with their points down.*—"Is it a bright object? . . . Something long ways [indicating verticality]. . . . A pair of scissors standing up. . . . A little bit open." Time, about a minute altogether. She then drew her impression, and it was correct in every particular. The object in this experiment was on a settee behind her, but its position had to be pointed out to her when, after the experiment, she wanted to see it.

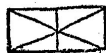
*Next object—a drawing of a right angle triangle on its side.*—(It's a drawing.) She drew an isosceles triangle on its side.

*Next—a circle with a chord across it.*—She drew two detached ovals, one with a cutting line across it.

*Next—a drawing of a Union Jack pattern.*—As usual in drawing



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experiments, Miss R. remained silent for perhaps a minute; then she said, "Now, I am ready." I hid the object; she took off

the handkerchief, and proceeded to draw on paper placed ready in front of her. She this time drew all the lines of the figure except the horizontal middle one. She was obviously much tempted to draw this, and, indeed, began it two or three times faintly, but ultimately said, "No, I'm not sure," and stopped.

[END OF SITTING]

*Experiments with Miss R.—continued*

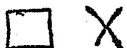
I will now describe an experiment indicating that one agent may be better than another.

*Object—the Three of Hearts.*—Miss E. and Mr. Birchall both present as agents, but Mr. Birchall holding percipient's hands at first. "Is it a black cross . . . a white ground with a black cross on it?" Mr. Birchall now let Miss E. hold hands instead of himself, and Miss R. very soon said, "Is it a card?" (Right.) "Are there three spots on it? . . . Don't know what they are . . . I don't think I can get the colour. . . . They are one above the other, but they seem three round spots. . . . I think they're red, but am not clear."

*Next object—a playing card with a blue anchor painted on it slantwise, instead of pips.* No contact at all this time, but another lady, Miss R—d, who had entered the room, assisted Mr. B. and Miss E. as agents. "Is it an anchor? . . . a little on the slant." (Do you see any colour?) "Colour is black . . . It's a nicely drawn anchor." When asked to draw she sketched part of it, but had evidently half forgotten it, and not knowing the use of the cross arm, she could only indicate that there was something more there, but she couldn't remember what. Her drawing had the right slant.

*Another object—two pair of coarse lines crossing; drawn in red chalk, and set up at some distance from agents.* No contact. "I only see lines crossing." She saw no colour. She afterwards drew them quite correctly, but very small. [It was noticeable that the unusual distance at which the drawing was placed from the agent on this occasion seemed to be interpreted by the percipient as smallness of size.]

*Double object.*—It was now that I arranged the double object between Miss R—d and Miss E., who happened to be sitting nearly facing one another. [See *Nature*, June 12th, 1884, for the published report of this particular incident which has been reproduced above, page 28.] The drawing was a square on one side of the paper, a cross on the other. Miss R—d looked at the side with the square on it. Miss E. looked at the side



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with the cross. Neither knew what the other was looking at—nor did the percipient know that anything unusual was being tried. Mr. Birchall was silently asked to take off his attention, and he got up and looked out of window before the drawings were brought in, and during the experiment. There was no contact. Very soon Miss R. said, "I see things moving about. . . . I seem to see two things . . . I see first one up there and then one down there . . . I don't know which to draw. . . . I can't see either distinctly." (Well, anyhow, draw what you have seen.) She took off the bandage and drew first a square, and then said, "Then there was the other thing as well . . . afterwards they seemed to go into one," and she drew a cross inside the square from corner to corner, adding afterwards, "I don't know what made me put it inside."

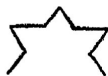
The next is a case of a perfect stranger acting as agent by himself at the first trial. Dr. Shears, house physician at the Eye and Ear Infirmary, came down to see the phenomena, and Miss R. having arrived before the others, Mr. Guthrie proposed his trying as agent alone. Dr. Shears, therefore, held Miss R.'s hand while I set up in front of him a card: nothing whatever being said as to the nature of the object.

*Object—the five of clubs, at first on a white ground.* "Is it something bright?" (No answer, but I changed the object to a black ground where it was more conspicuous.) "A lot of black with a white square on it." (Go on.) "Is it a card?" (Yes.) [The affirmative answer did not necessarily signify that it was a playing card; because cards looking like playing cards had been used several times previously, on which objects had been depicted instead of pips.] "Are there five spots on it?" (Yes.) "Black ones." (Right.) "I can't see the suit, but I think it's spades."

*Another object at same sitting, but with several agents, no contact, was a drawing of this form—*



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"I can see something, but I am sure I can't draw it. . . . It's something with points all round it. . . . It's a star, . . . or like a triangle within a triangle." Asked to draw it, she expressed reluctance, said it was too difficult, and drew part of a star figure, evidently a crude reproduction of the original, but incomplete. She then began afresh by drawing a triangle, but was unable to proceed.

I then showed her the object for a few seconds. She exclaimed, "Oh yes, that's what I saw. . . . I understand it now." I said, "Well, now draw it." She made a more complete attempt, but it was no more really like the original than the first had been. Here it is :



SKETCH MADE AFTER SEEING THE ORIGINAL

*Experiments at a Sitting in the room of Dr. Herdman, Professor of Zoology at University College*

*Object—a drawing of the outline of a flag.*—Miss R. as percipient in contact with Miss E. as agent. Very quickly Miss R. said, "It's a little flag," and when asked to draw, she drew it fairly well but "perverted" as depicted in the figure. I showed her the flag (as usual after a success), and then took it away to the drawing place to fetch something else. I made another drawing, but instead of bringing it I brought the flag back again, and set



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it up in the same place as before, but upside down. There was no contact this time. Miss R.—d and Miss E. were acting as agents.

*Object—same flag inverted.*—After some time, Miss R. said, "No, I can't see anything this time. I still see that flag. . . . The flag keeps bothering me. . . . I shan't do it this time." Presently I said, "Well, draw what you saw anyway," She said, "I only saw the same flag, but perhaps it had a cross on it." So she drew a flag in the same position as before, but added a cross to it. Questioned as to aspect she said, "Yes, it was just the same as before."



*Object—an oval gold locket hanging by a bit of string with a little price label attached.*—Placed like the former object on a large drawing board, swathed in a college gown. The percipient, Miss R., close behind the said board and almost hidden by it. Agents, Miss R.—d and Miss E. sitting in front; no contact; nothing said. "I see something gold, . . . something hanging, . . . like a gold locket." (What shape?) "It's oval," indicating with her fingers correctly. "Very good so far, tell us something more)—[meaning ticket at top]. But no more was said. When shown the object she said, "Oh, yes, it was just like that," but she had seen nothing of the little paper ticket.

*Next object—a watch and chain pinned up to the board as on a waistcoat.*—This experiment was a failure, and is only interesting because the watch-ticking sounded abnormally loud, sufficient to give any amount of hint to a person on the look out for such sense indications. But it is very evident to those witnessing the experiments that the percipient is in a quite different attitude of mind to that of a clever guesser, and ordinary sense indications seem wholly neglected. I scarcely expected, however, that the watch-ticking could pass unnoticed, though indeed we shuffled our feet to drown it somewhat, but so it was, and all we got was "something bright . . . either steel or silver. . . . Is it anything like a pair of scissors?" (Not a bit.)

I have now done with the selection of experiments in which Miss R. acted as percipient; and I will describe some of those made with Miss E. At the time these seemed perhaps less satisfactory and complete, but there are several points of considerable interest noticeable in connection with them.

#### B.—EXPERIMENTS WITH MISS E. AS PERCIPIENT

*Object—an oblong piece of red (cerise) silk.* Agent, Mr. B., in contact.—"Red." (What sort of red?) "A dark red." (What shape?) "One patch." (Well, what shade is it?) "Not a pale red."

*Next object—a yellow oblong.* Agent as before.—"A dusky gold colour. . . . A square of some yellow shade."

*Object—the printed letter r.* Told it was a letter; agent as before.—"I can see R." (What sort of R?) "An ordinary capital R."

This illustrates feebly what often, though not always, happens with Miss E.—that the idea of the object is grasped rather than its actual shape.

*Another object—a small printed e.*—"Is it E?" (Yes.) But, again, she couldn't tell what sort of E it was.

*Object—a teapot cut out of silver paper.*—Present—Dr. Herdman,



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Miss R—d, and Miss R., Miss R. holding percipient's hands, but all thinking of the object. Told nothing. She said, "Something light. . . . No colour. . . . Looks like a duck. . . . Like a silver duck. . . . Something oval. . . . Head at one end and tail at the other." [This is not uncommon in ducks.] The object, being rather large, was then moved farther back, so that it might be more easily grasped by the agents as a whole, but percipient persisted that it was like a duck. On being told to unbandage and draw, she drew a rude and "perverted" copy of the teapot, but didn't know what it was unless it was a duck. Dr. Herdman then explained that he had been thinking all the time how like a duck the original teapot was, and, in fact, had been thinking more of ducks than teapots.

*Next object—a hand mirror brought in and set up in front of Miss R—d.*—No contact at first. Told nothing. She said, "Is it a colour?" (No.) "No, I don't see anything." The glass was then shifted for Miss R. to look at herself in it, holding percipient's hand. "No, I don't get this." Gave it up. I then hid the mirror in my coat, and took it out of the room. Dr. Herdman reports that while I was away Miss E. begged to know what the object had been, but the agents refused, saying that I had evidently wished to keep it secret. Half annoyed, Miss E. said, "Oh, well, it doesn't matter. I believe it was a looking-glass."

*Next object—a drawing of a right-angled triangle.* No contact.—"Is it like that?" drawing a triangle with her finger (no answer). "It's almost like a triangle." She then drew an isosceles triangle.

*Next object—a drawing of two parallel but curved lines.* No contact.—"I only see two lines," indicating two parallel lines. "Now they seem to close up."

*Next object—a tetrahedron outline rudely drawn in projection.*—



"Is it another triangle?" (No answer was made, but I silently passed round to the agents a scribbled message, "Think of a pyramid.") Miss E. then said, "I only see a triangle." . . . then hastily, "Pyramids of Egypt. No, I shan't do this." Asked to draw, she only drew a triangle.

*Object—a rude outline of a donkey or other quadruped.*—Still no contact at first. "Can't get it, I am sure." I then asked the agents to leave the room, and to come in and try one by one. First Miss R—d, without contact, and then with. Next Miss R., in contact, when Miss E. said hopelessly, "An old woman in a poke bonnet." Finally I tried as agent alone, and Miss E. said, "It's like a donkey, but I can't see it, nor can I draw it."

## GENERAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE EXPERIMENTS

In addition to the experiments with single percipients, I tried a few with both percipients sitting together—hoping to learn something by comparing their different perceptions of the same object. But unfortunately these experiments were not very successful; sometimes they each appeared to get different aspects or the parts of object, but never very distinct or perfect impressions. The necessity of imposing silence on the percipients, as well as on the agents, was also rather irksome, and renders the results less describable without the actual drawings. I still think that this variation might convey something interesting if pursued under favourable circumstances. Whether greater agent-power is necessary to affect two percipients as strongly as one; or whether the blankness of mind of one percipient re-acts on the other, I cannot say.

With regard to the feelings of the percipients when receiving an impression, they seem to have some sort of consciousness of the action of other minds on them; and once or twice, when not so conscious, have complained that there seemed to be "no power" or anything acting, and that they not only received no impression, but did not feel as if they were going to.

I asked Miss E. what she felt when impressions were coming freely, and she said she felt a sort of influence or thrill. They both say that several images appear to them sometimes, but that one among them persistently recurs, and they have a feeling when they fix upon one that it is the right one.

Sometimes they seem quite certain that they are right. Sometimes they are very uncertain, but still right. Occasionally Miss E. has been pretty confident and yet wrong.

One serious failure rather depresses them, and after a success others often follow. It is because of these rather delicate psychological conditions that one cannot press the variations of an experiment as far as one

would do if dealing with inert and more dependable matter. Usually the presence of a stranger spoils the phenomenon, though in some cases a stranger has proved a good agent straight off.

The percipients complain of no fatigue as induced by the experiments, and I have no reason to suppose that any harm is done them. The agent, on the other hand, if very energetic, is liable to contract a headache ; and Mr. Guthrie himself, who was a powerful and determined agent for a long time, now feels it wiser to refrain from acting, and conducts the experiments with great moderation.

If experiments are only conducted for an hour or so a week, no harm can, I should judge, result, and it would be very interesting to know what percentage of people have the perceptive faculty well developed.

The experiments are easy to try, but they should be tried soberly and quietly, like any other experiment. A public platform is a most unsuitable place ; and nothing tried before a mixed or jovial audience can be of the slightest scientific value. Such demonstrations may be efficient in putting money into the pockets of showmen, or in amusing one's friends ; but all real evidence must be obtained in the quiet of the laboratory or the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### FURTHER EXPERIMENTS IN TELEPATHY

THE next experience of any importance which I had in this kind of experimental telepathy took place during a visit to Carinthia, the Austrian province beyond Tyrol—with some English friends during the summer of 1892, and is thus described in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, vol. vii., page 374.

While staying for a fortnight in the house of Herr von

Lyro, at Pörschach am See, Carinthia, I found that his two adult daughters were adepts in the so-called "willing-game," and were accustomed to entertain their friends by the speed and certainty with which they could perform actions decided on by the company; the operator being led either by one or by two others, and preferring to be led by someone to whom she was accustomed. Another lady staying in the house was said to be able to do things equally well, but not without nervous prostration.

On the evening when I witnessed the occurrences nothing done could be regarded as conclusive against muscle-reading, though the speed and accuracy with which the willed action was performed exceeded any muscle-reading that I had previously seen, and left me little doubt but that there was some genuine thought-transference power.

Accordingly I obtained permission to experiment in a more satisfactory manner, and on several occasions tested the power of the two sisters, using one as agent and the other as percipient alternately. Once or twice a stranger was asked to act as agent, but without success.

The operations were conducted in an ordinary simple manner. One of the sisters was placed behind a drawing board, erected by me on a temporary sort of easel, while the other sat in front of the same board; and the objects or drawings to be guessed were placed on a ledge in front of the board, in full view of the one and completely hidden from the other.

Naturally I attended to the absence of mirrors and all such obvious physical complications. The percipient preferred to be blindfolded, but no precaution was taken with reference to this blindfolding, since we know that it is unsafe to put any trust in bandaging of eyes (*Journal*, i. 84). Agent and percipient were within reach of one another, and usually held each other's hands across a small table. The kind and amount of contact was under control, and was sometimes broken altogether, as is subsequently related.

The ladies were interested in the subject, and were perfectly willing to try any change of conditions that I suggested, and my hope was gradually to secure the phenomenon without contact of any kind, as I had done in the previous case reported ; but unfortunately in the present instance contact seemed essential to the transfer. Very slight contact was sufficient, for instance, through the backs of the knuckles ; but directly the hands were separated, even though but a quarter of an inch, the phenomena ceased,—reappearing again directly contact was established. I tried whether I could bridge over the gap effectively with my own, or another lady's hand ; but that did not do. I also once tried both sisters blindfolded, and holding each other by one hand, while two other persons completed the chain and tried to act as agents. After a time the sisters were asked to draw, simultaneously and independently, what they had " seen " ; but though the two drawings were close imitations of each other, they in this case bore no likeness to the object on which the agents had been gazing. My impression, therefore, is that there is some kind of close sympathetic connection between the sisters, so that an idea may, as it were, reverberate between their minds when their hands touch, but that they are only faintly, if at all, susceptible to the influence of outside persons.

Whether the importance of contact in this case depends upon the fact that it is the condition to which they have always been accustomed, or whether it is a really effective aid, I am not sure.

So far as my own observation went, it was interesting and new to me to see how clearly the effect seemed to depend on contact, and how abruptly it ceased when contact was broken. While guessing through a pack of cards, for instance, rapidly and continuously, I sometimes allowed contact and sometimes stopped it ; and the guesses changed, from frequently correct to quite wild, directly the knuckles or finger tips, or any part of the skin of the two hands, ceased to touch. It was almost like breaking an electric circuit. At the same

time, partial contact seemed less effective than a thorough hand grasp.

It is perfectly obvious how strongly this dependence on contact suggests the idea of a code ; and I have to admit at once that this flaw prevents this series of observations from having any value as a test case, or as establishing *de novo* the existence of the genuine power. My record only appeals to those who, on other grounds, have accepted the general possibility of thought-transference, and who, therefore, need not feel unduly strained when asked to credit my assertion that unfair practices were extremely unlikely ; and that, apart from this moral conviction, there was a sufficient amount of internal evidence derived from the facts themselves to satisfy me that no code was used. The internal evidence of which I am thinking was : (1) the occasionally successful reproduction of nameless drawings ; (2) the occasional failure to get any clue to an object or drawing with a perfectly simple and easily telegraphed name ; (3) the speed with which the guesses were often made.

I wish, however, to say that none of the evidence which I can offer against a prearranged code in this case is scientifically and impersonally conclusive, nor could it be accepted as of sufficient weight by a sceptic on the whole subject. It is only because, with full opportunity of forming a judgment, and in the light of my former experience, I am myself satisfied that what I observed was an instance of genuine sympathetic or syntonetic communication, and because such cases seem at the present time to be rather rare, that I make this brief report on the circumstances.

I detected no well-marked difference between the powers of the two sisters, and it will be understood that one of them was acting as agent and the other as percipient in each case. Sometimes the parents of the girls were present, but often only one or two friends of my own, who were good enough to invite the young ladies to their sitting-room for the purpose of experiment ; though such experiments are, when

carefully performed, confessedly rather tedious and dull.

In the early willing-game experiments, such things were done as taking a particular ring from one person's hand and putting it on another's; selecting a definite piece of music from a pile, taking it to the piano, and beginning to play it. The last item (the beginning to play) I did not happen to witness, but I was told of it by several persons as more than could be accounted for by muscle-reading. A sceptic, however, could of course object that imperfect bandaging would enable a title to be read.

One of the things I suggested was aimed at excluding the operation of unconscious muscular guidance as far as possible, and it consisted in desiring that the lady while standing in the middle of the room should kick off her shoes without touching them and begin to sing a specified song. Success, however, was only partial. After one or two attempts to wander about the room as usual, she did shuffle a shoe off, but though she did not actually touch her feet she stooped so that the held hand came very near them. She then stood some little time uncertain what to do next, and at last broke silence by saying "Shall I sing?"

The first attempt at the more careful experiments was not at all successful, but novelty of conditions may fairly be held responsible for that. On the second and subsequent evenings success was much more frequent: on the whole, I think, more frequent than failure,—certainly far beyond chance. I proceed to give a fairly complete account of the whole series.

The first object was a teapot; but there was no result.

The first drawing was the outline of a box with a flag at one corner; but that produced no impression.

Next, for simplicity, I explained that the object this time was a letter (*Buchstabe*), on which it was correctly guessed E. Another letter, M, was given quite wrong. A childish back-view outline of a cat was given oval like an egg; some other things were unperceived.

On the second evening I began by saying that the object was a colour; on which red was instantly and correctly stated.

A blue object which followed was guessed wrong.

An outline figure of a horse was correctly named. So was the letter B. I then drew a square with a diagonal cross, and a round ring or spot just above the intersection, the whole looking something like the back of an envelope. After a certain interval of silence (perhaps two minutes) the lady said she was ready to draw what she had "seen," and drew the thing almost exactly, except that the spot was put right on the centre of the cross instead of above it, and a superfluous faint vertical stroke was added. Its possible resemblance to an envelope was not detected, nor did the reproduction suggest the idea: it was drawn as, and looked like, a nameless geometrical figure.

The reproductions were nearly always much smaller in size than the originals. The agent did not look on while the reproduction was being made. It is best for no one to look on while the percipient draws, to avoid the possibility of unconscious indications. The original drawings were always made by me, sometimes before, sometimes during, the sitting. These conditions were all satisfactory.

On the third evening I began with a pack of cards, running through them quickly; with 2 reporters, one recording the card held up, the other recording the guess made, without knowing whether it was right or wrong. I held up the cards one after the other and gave no indication whether the guesses were right or wrong. The suit was not attempted, so that the chances of error were, I suppose, 12 to 1.

On comparing the two lists afterwards, out of 16 guesses only 6 were wrong. Full contact was allowed during this series. The lists are reproduced below.

The card guessing is obviously not of the slightest use unless *bona-fides* be certain, but, given that, it affords the readiest method of studying the effect of varied conditions, interposed obstacles, and such like. The whole pack was always used and I simply cut it at random and held up the bottom card. About 10 or 12 cards could be got through in a minute.

The following is the list of the first card series. Full contact allowed :—

CARD LOOKED AT	CARD GUESSED
Seven of Spades . . . . .	Seven
Six of Hearts . . . . .	Six
Queen of Spades . . . . .	King
Nine of Spades . . . . .	Nine
Three of Spades . . . . .	Six
Eight of Diamonds . . . . .	Eight
Ace of Clubs . . . . .	Ace
Knave of Diamonds . . . . .	Queen
Five of Diamonds . . . . .	Five
Two of Spades . . . . .	Ace
Ten of Hearts . . . . .	Six



CARD LOOKED AT	CARD GUESSED
King of Diamonds . . . . .	King
Ace of Spades . . . . .	Ace
Nine of Diamonds . . . . .	Six
Eight of Hearts . . . . .	Eight
Four of Spades . . . . .	Four

Thus, out of the sixteen trials, 10 were correct and 6 were wrong.

Whatever may be the cause of this amount of success, *chance* is entirely out of the question, since the probability of so many successes as ten in sixteen trials, when the individual probability each time is one-thirteenth, is too small to be taken into account.

The theory of such a calculation is given in Todhunter's Algebra, articles 740 and 741; but as exactness in such a case is rather tedious and unnecessary, we may over-estimate the total probability by calculating it as follows:  $\frac{16!}{10!6!} \left(\frac{1}{13}\right)^{10}$ ; thus leaving out the factor  $\left(\frac{12}{13}\right)^6$ . This factor would be necessary to give the chance of ten successes *exactly*; but that is needlessly narrow, since there is no particular point in the exact number of 10. The chance of ten *at least* is more like what we have to express.

So an over-estimate of probability is  $\frac{8008}{13^{10}}$ ; that is to say, there is less than one chance in ten million that such a result would occur at perfect random, *i.e.* without any special cause.

Some guesses were made, both with cards and objects, on another evening, without contact, but none were successful. With contact there was success again.

I then went back to simple drawings; with the result that a cross was reproduced as a cross; a figure like 4 petals was reproduced in two ways, one of them being a vague 5-petalled figure.

An object consisting of an ivory pocket measure, standing on end like an inverted V, was drawn fairly well as to general aspect.

A sinuous line was reproduced as a number of sinuous lines. A triangle or wedge, point downward, was reproduced imperfectly.

On other evenings other simple diagrams were tried, such as a face, reproduced as 3 rounds with dots and cross; and a figure like an A with an extra long cross stroke, which could be easily

signalled as an A, but which was reproduced correctly as a geometrical diagram with the long stroke prominent.

A circle with 3 radii was reproduced as a circle with roughly inscribed triangle.

The number 3145 was reproduced orally and very quickly as 3146; 715 also quickly as "714, no 715." The written word *hund* was reproduced correctly, but with a capital initial letter.

And being told that they had previously thus reproduced a word in an unknown language (not unknown character), viz., Hungarian, I tried the Greek letters  $\Phi\alpha\iota\delta\omega$ ; this, however, was considered too puzzling and was only reproduced as *Uaso*.

A French high-heeled shoe, of crockery, set up as object, was drawn by the percipient very fairly correct, and said to be something like a boot, and a protuberance was tacked on where the heel was.

A white plaster cast of a child's hand, next tried, failed to give any impression. An unlighted candle in candlestick was unsuccessful, and it was objected that there was too much glare of light. Subsequently the percipient said she had seen the general outline of a candlestick but did not think of its being the thing. A teapot and a cup both failed, and two of the drawings did not succeed in stimulating any colourable imitation.

Lastly, another set of card trials were made, with the object of testing the effect of various kinds of contact: a card series being quick and easy to run through.

	CARD EXHIBITED TO AGENT	CARD NAMED BY PERCIPIENT
Full contact with both hands . . . .	{ Nine . King .	{ Nine . King .
Contact with tips of fingers only . . .	{ Knave . Nine . Nine . Queen . Eight .	{ Two . Nine . Ten . Two . Eight .
Contact with one finger of one hand . . . .	{ Five . Seven . Three . Ten . Queen . Ace .	{ Six . Seven . Four . Six . Two . Ace .
No contact.	{ Ace . Knave .	{ Four . Five .
No direct contact, but gap bridged by other person's hand	{ King . Four . Ten .	{ Four . Eight . Seven .

	CARD EXHIBITED TO AGENT	CARD NAMED BY PERCIPIENT
Slight contact knuckles . . .	Eight . . .	Six
	Six . . .	Ace
	Two . . .	Two
	Knave . . .	Ace
Full contact again	Seven . . .	Six
	Three . . .	Three
	Four . . .	Four
	Ace of Diamonds	Ace—red—Diamond
	Nine of Clubs held sideways	Nine—Clubs

The *record* of this series is more complete than that of another varying contact series,—reported below,—but it did not strike me as so instructive at the time; and as it came toward the end of an evening there was probably some fatigue.

The last two entries represent attempts to get the suit as well; but as the particulars are given in stages there is no particular advantage in thus naming a card completely, and it takes a longer time.

On another evening the amount of contact was varied, but I omitted to call out to the reporter the position of the hands with reference to each other. One hand of each person lay on a table, and I sometimes made them touch, sometimes separated them, all the time going on with the card series. My impression at the time was (as expressed above) that pronounced failure began directly I broke contact, but that mere knuckle contact was sufficient to permit some amount of success. [When successes are frequent in the following list, fairly complete contact may be assumed. At other times I broke and united the two hands as I chose, for my own edification, and was struck with the singular efficiency of contact.]

I can only give the record as it stands. I believe we began without any contact, but very soon made the hands touch intermittently.

*Second Card Series. Varying amount of contact : sometimes none*

CARD DRAWN	CARD GUESSED
2 of Spades . . . . .	Knave
Ace of Diamonds . . . . .	5
Knave of Diamonds . . . . .	Knave
10 of Diamonds . . . . .	9
6 of Hearts . . . . .	5
8 of Hearts . . . . .	9
9 of Diamonds . . . . .	Ace
King of Diamonds . . . . .	King

## THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE

CARD DRAWN						CARD GUESSED
10 of Hearts	.	.	.	.	.	10
9 of Clubs	.	.	.	.	.	9
Ace	.	.	.	.	.	Ace
Queen	.	.	.	.	.	2
Queen	.	.	.	.	.	Queen
Knave	.	.	.	.	.	Ace
King	.	.	.	.	.	King
<hr/>						
8	.	.	.	.	.	8
8	.	.	.	.	.	8
7	.	.	.	.	.	8
Ace	.	.	.	.	.	Ace
Knave	.	.	.	.	.	Knave
7	.	.	.	.	.	7
4	.	.	.	.	.	4
<hr/>						
9	.	.	.	.	.	6
Queen	.	.	.	.	.	3
King	.	.	.	.	.	King
Ace	.	.	.	.	.	7
Ace	.	.	.	.	.	5
5	.	.	.	.	.	10
5	.	.	.	.	.	4
6	.	.	.	.	.	7
5	.	.	.	.	.	3
<hr/>						
6	.	.	.	.	.	6
2	.	.	.	.	.	3
3	.	.	.	.	.	6
4	.	.	.	.	.	4
<hr/>						
2	.	.	.	.	.	8
4	.	.	.	.	.	5
3	.	.	.	.	.	4
3	.	.	.	.	.	Knave

Where lines are drawn it is because I called out some change in the contact; but I made other changes whose occurrence is not recorded.

The only use to be made of the record of this series, therefore, is to treat it as a whole and to observe that out of 39 trials 16 were correct and 23 wrong.

On this occasion there was one reporter who wrote down both what he saw and what he heard; and the operation was so rapid that he had sometimes barely

time to do the writing. Towards the end of a series, fatigue on the part of either agent or percipient generally seemed to spoil the conditions.

It is manifest that these experiments should not be conducted too long consecutively, nor repeated without sufficient interval; but if common sense is used there is nothing deleterious in the attempt, and if more persons tried, probably the power would be found more widely distributed than is at present suspected.

I wish to express gratitude to the Fräulein von Lyro and their parents, for the courtesy with which they acquiesced in my request for opportunities of experiment, and for the willingness with which they submitted to dull and irksome conditions, in order to enable me to give as good evidence as possible.

#### EXPERIMENTS AT A DISTANCE

For more recent experiments, and for experiments conducted over a considerable intervening distance, I must refer to the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, vol. xxi., where an account is given of the notable and careful series of observations made by two lady members of the Society, Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden. These ladies, while at their respective homes, or staying in country houses and other places at a distance from each other, endeavoured to transmit an impression of scenes and occupations from one to the other. They kept a careful record both of what they tried to send, and of what was received. And when these records are compared, the correspondence is seen to be beyond and above anything that might be due to chance.

Collusion might rationally be urged as an explanation, by strangers; but that is not an explanation that can be accepted by those who know all the facts.

When Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden began their experiments in 1905, Miss Miles was living in London,

and Miss Ramsden in Buckinghamshire, and the arrangement was that Miss Miles should play the part of agent, Miss Ramsden that of percipient, the times of the experiment being fixed beforehand. Miss Miles noted, at the time of each experiment, in a book kept for the purpose, the idea or image which she wished to convey; while Miss Ramsden wrote down each day the impressions that had come into her mind, and sent the record to Miss Miles before knowing what she had attempted on her side. Miss Miles then pasted this record into her book opposite her own notes, and in some cases added a further note explanatory of her circumstances at the time; since to these it was found that Miss Ramsden's impressions often corresponded. Whenever it was possible Miss Miles obtained confirmatory evidence from other persons as to the circumstances that had not been noted at the time, and the corroboration of these persons was written in her book. All the original records of these experiments have been submitted to the Editor of the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, and have passed that very critical ordeal.

In the second series of experiments, in October and November 1906, Miss Miles, the agent, was staying first near Bristol and afterwards near Malmesbury in Wiltshire; while Miss Ramsden, the percipient, was living all the time near Kingussie, Inverness-shire, and therefore at a distance of about 400 miles from the agent. During the last three days of the experiments, Miss Miles, unknown to Miss Ramsden, was in London.

The general plan of action was that Miss Ramsden should think of Miss Miles regularly at 7 p.m. on every day that an experiment was to be tried, and should write her impressions on a postcard or letter card, which was posted almost always on the next morning to Miss Miles. These postcards or letter cards were kept by Miss Miles and pasted into her notebook, so that the postmarks on them show the time of despatch. And copies of many of these postcards were sent also at the same time to Professor Barrett, who had advised concerning the method of experiment.

Miss Miles on her side had no fixed time for thinking of Miss Ramsden, but thought of her more or less during the whole day, and in the evening noted briefly what ideas had been most prominently before her mind during the day, and which she wished to convey, or thought might have been conveyed, to Miss Ramsden. These notes were made generally on a postcard, which was, as a rule, posted to Miss Ramsden next day. The postcards were afterwards returned to Miss Miles to be placed with her records,—so that here also the postmarks show the date of despatch of the information to Miss Ramsden.

Out of a total of fifteen days' experiments, the idea that Miss Miles was attempting to convey, as recorded on her postcards, appeared on six occasions in a complete or partial form among Miss Ramsden's impressions on the same date. But it also happened that almost every day some of Miss Ramsden's impressions represented, pretty closely, something that Miss Miles had been seeing or talking about on the same day. In other words,—while the agent only succeeded occasionally in transferring the ideas deliberately chosen by her for the purpose, the percipient seemed often to have some sort of supernormal knowledge of her friend's surroundings, irrespective of what that friend had specially wished her to see.

When this happened, Miss Miles at once made careful notes of the event or topic to which Miss Ramsden's statement seemed to refer, and also obtained corroborations from her friends on the spot. Further, when Miss Ramsden gave descriptions of scenes which seemed to Miss Miles like the places where she was staying, she got picture postcards of them, or photographed them, to show how far the descriptions really corresponded.

The actual record is given in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, vol. xxi., together with illustrations, but it must suffice here to quote the critical and judicial opinion of the Editor, which is thus given :—

“ After studying all the records, it appears to us that while some of the coincidences of thought between the

two experimenters are probably accidental, the total amount of correspondence is more than can be thus accounted for and points distinctly to the action of telepathy between them."

The importance of the record is due to the distance intervening between agent and percipient in this case—a distance which seemed to make any physical method of communication unlikely, and to suggest—what otherwise suggested itself as most probable even when the experiments were in the same room—a true interaction or intercommunion between mind and mind.

## CHAPTER V

### SPONTANEOUS CASES OF THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE

A NEW fact of this sort, if really established, must have innumerable consequences: among other things it may be held to account for a large number of phenomena alleged to occur spontaneously, but never yet received with full credence by scientific authority.

Such cases as those which immediately follow, for instance, we now begin to classify under the head "spontaneous telepathy," and it is natural to endeavour to proceed further in the same direction and use extended telepathy as a possible clue to many other legendary occurrences also; as we shall endeavour to show in the next chapter.

### TWO CASES

As stepping stones from the experimental to the spontaneous cases I quote two from a mass of material at the end of Mr. Myers's first volume, page 674; the first concerning a remote connexion of my own.



On the 27th of April, 1889, we were expecting my sister-in-law and her daughter from South America. My wife, being away from home, was unable to meet them at Southampton, so an intimate friend of the family, a Mr. P., offered to do so. It was between Derby and Leicester about 3.30 p.m. My wife was travelling in the train. She closed her eyes to rest, and at the same moment a telegram paper appeared before her with the words, "Come at once, your sister is dangerously ill." During the afternoon I received a telegram from Mr. P. to my wife, worded exactly the same and sent from Southampton 3.30 p.m. to Bedford. On my wife's arrival home about 9 p.m. I deferred communicating it until she had some refreshment, being very tired. I afterwards made the remark, "I have some news for you," and she answered, "Yes, I thought so, you have received a telegram from Mr. P.!" I said, "How do you know?" She then told me the contents and her strange experiences in the train, and that it impressed her so much that she felt quite anxious all the rest of the journey.

With regard to the above, my wife had no idea of her sister being ill, and was not even at the time thinking about them, but was thinking about her own child she had just left at a boarding school. Also the handwriting my wife saw, she recognised at once to be Mr. P.'s. But then, again, he would have been writing on a white paper form, and the one she saw was the usual brown coloured paper.

FREDK. L. LODGE.

In reply to inquiries, Mr. F. Lodge wrote as follows :—

The letter I sent you, with account of vision, I wrote from my wife's dictation. After it occurred in the train she took notice of the hour, and from the time marked on the telegram of its despatch from Southampton, we at once remarked it must have occurred as Mr. P. was filling in a form at Southampton. Mr. P. is now in South America constructing a railway line, and will not return to England for about a year. The occurrence was mentioned to him.

Two years having elapsed, my wife could not say the exact time now, but it was between 3 and 4 p.m., although when it happened, we did notice from the telegram that the time corresponded.

FREDK. L. LODGE.

The second case illustrates the communicating of sensations,—a possibility verified in the Liverpool experiments of Mr. Malcolm Guthrie, already referred to on pages 27—43. In addition to impressions of pictures and objects, a pinch or other pain, or a taste caused

by some food or chemical, was there often transferred from agent to percipient. Contact was usually found essential for success in these experimental cases ; but, to guard against normal sensation, the agent and percipient were arranged in separate rooms, with a specially contrived and padded small hole in the wall so that they could hold hands through it. Some early experiments of this kind are narrated in the first volume of *Proceedings*, S.P.R., page 275 ; but I myself was present at many others of the same kind.

Here follows an account of the incident which happened to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Severn ; the narrative having been obtained through the kindness of Mr. Ruskin. Mrs. Severn says :—

BRANTWOOD, CONISTON

October 27th, 1883

I woke up with a start, feeling I had had a hard blow on my mouth and with a distinct sense that I had been cut, and was bleeding under my upper lip, and seized my pocket-handkerchief, and held it (in a little pushed lump) to the part as I sat up in bed ; and after a few seconds, when I removed it, I was astonished not to see any blood, and only then realised it was impossible anything could have struck me there, as I lay fast asleep in bed, and so I thought it was only a dream !—but I looked at my watch, and saw it was seven, and finding Arthur (my husband) was not in the room, I concluded (rightly) that he must have gone out on the lake for an early sail, as it was so fine.

I then fell asleep. At breakfast (half-past nine), Arthur came in rather late, and I noticed he rather purposely sat farther away from me than usual, and every now and then put his pocket-handkerchief furtively up to his lip, in the very way I had done. I said, 'Arthur, why are you doing that ?' and added a little anxiously, 'I know you have hurt yourself ! but I'll tell you why afterwards.' He said 'Well, when I was sailing, a sudden squall came, throwing the tiller suddenly round, and it struck me a bad blow in the mouth, under the upper lip, and it has been bleeding a good deal and won't stop.' I then said, 'Have you any idea what o'clock it was when it happened ?' and he answered, 'It must have been about seven.'

I then told what had happened to *me*, much to *his* surprise, and all who were with us at breakfast.

It happened here about three years ago at Brantwood.

JOAN R. SEVERN

The episode is duly authenticated, in accordance with the rule of the S.P.R., by concurrent testimony (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. ii., p. 128 ; also *Phantasms*, i. 188.

### ANOTHER CASE

A case of clairvoyance or distant telepathy was told me by my colleague, Professor R. A. S. Redmayne (now Sir R. Redmayne, H.M. Chief Inspector of Mines), as having happened in his own experience when he was engaged in prospecting for mines in a remote district of South Africa accompanied only by a working miner from Durham. His account is here abbreviated :—

So far as they could keep a record of weeks the solitary two used to play at some game on Sundays, instead of working, but on one particular Sunday the workman declined to play, saying he did not feel up to it, as he had just had an intimation of his mother's death,—that she had spoken of him in her last hours saying that she " would never see Albert again."

My informant tried to chaff his assistant out of his melancholy, since it was a physical impossibility that they could receive recent news by any normal means. But he adhered to his conviction, and in accordance with North Country tradition seemed to regard it as natural that he should thus know.

Weeks afterwards complete confirmation came from England, both as to date and circumstance ; the words of the dying woman having been similar to those felt at the time by her distant son.

The occurrence made a marked impression on my informant and broke down his scepticism as to the possibility of these strange occurrences.

Fortunately I am able to quote confirmatory evidence of this narrative ; for very soon after the verification Professor Redmayne wrote an account of it to his father, and from this gentleman I have received a certified copy of the letter :—

#### LETTER FROM PROFESSOR REDMAYNE TO HIS FATHER

MGAGANE, NR. NEWCASTLE, NATAL,  
21st Nov., 1891

I have a curious and startling thing to tell you :—About 6 weeks ago, Tonks said to me one morning, " My mother is

dead, Sir. I saw her early this morning lying dead in bed and the relatives standing round the bed; she said she would never see me again before she died." I laughed at him and ridiculed the matter, and he seemed to forget it, and we thought (no) more of it, but Tonks asked me to note the date, which I did not do. Last Wednesday, however, Tonks received a letter from his wife telling him that his mother was dead and had been buried a week, that she died early one Sunday morning about six weeks since and in her sleep; but before she fell asleep she said she would never see "Albert" again. About a fortnight since I told some people what Tonks had told me, giving it as an instance of the superstitiousness of the Durham pitmen, and they were startled when, the other day, I told them the dream had come true. I will never laugh at anything like this again.

The above is an extract from a letter from my son R. A. S. Redmayne written from Mgagane, Natal, S.A., and dated November 21st [1891].

JOHN M. REDMAYNE

*August 1st, 1902, HAREWOOD, GATESHEAD*

Professor Redmayne has also been good enough to get a certificate from the workman concerned, in the form of a copy of the main portion of the above letter, with the following note appended:—

The above extract correctly relates what occurred to me whilst living in Natal with Mr. Redmayne.

Signed ALBERT TONKS  
Date *August 21st, 1901*

*Witness to above Signature*      N. B. PADDON, Seaton Delaval

Garibaldi's dream of the death of his mother at Nice, when he was in mid-Pacific, is a historical instance of the same kind (G. M. Trevelyan, *Garibaldi and the Thousand*, p. 18).

## CHAPTER VI

### APPLIED TELEPATHY

#### AN EXAMPLE OF THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN THOUGHT ON ANCIENT SUPERSTITIONS

IT is being made clear, I hope, how the fact of thought-transference—especially of the unconscious or subliminal variety—enables us to admit the possibility of the truth of a large number of occurrences which previously we should have been liable to stigmatise as impossible and absurd. For in truth not only apparitions of the dying and phantasms of the living may tentatively and hypothetically be thus explained, but a number of other phenomena seem likely gradually to fall into their place in an orderly and intelligible Universe when submitted to this rationalising treatment. I do not say that its success is universal. I hold that it may be pressed too far; there are some things which even the greatest extension of it will not explain. Nevertheless when we have a clue we are bound to follow it up to the utmost before abandoning it, and we will therefore enter upon a consideration of as many phenomena as at this stage we can see any chance of beginning rationally to understand. So let us contemplate the subject as reasonably and physically as we can.

By thought-transference I mean a possible communication between mind and mind, by means other than any of the known organs of sense: what I may call a sympathetic connexion between mind and mind; using the term mind in a vague and popular sense, without strict definition. And as to the meaning of sympathetic connexion,—let us take some examples:—

A pair of iron levers, one on the ground, the other some hundred yards away on a post, are often seen to be sympathetically connected; for when a railway

official hauls one of them through a certain angle the distant lever or semaphore-arm revolves through a similar angle. The disturbance has travelled from one to the other through a very obvious medium of communication—viz., an iron wire or rope.

A reader unacquainted with physics may think "transmission" in this case a misnomer, since he may think the connexion is instantaneous—but it is not. The connexion is due to a pulse which travels at a perfectly definite and measured pace—approximately three miles per second.

The pulling of a knob, followed by the ringing of a bell, is a similar process, and the transmission of the impulse in either of these cases is commonly considered simple and mechanical. It is not so simple as we think; for concerning cohesion we are exceedingly ignorant, and why one end of a stick moves when the other end is touched no one at present is able clearly to tell us.

Consider, now, a couple of tuning forks, or precisely similar musical instruments, isolated from each other and from other bodies,—suspended in air, let us say. Sound one of them and the other responds—*i.e.* begins to emit the same note. This is known in acoustics as sympathetic resonance; and again a disturbance has travelled through the medium from one to the other. The medium in this case is intangible, but quite familiar, viz., atmospheric air.

Next, suspend a couple of magnets, alike in all respects; pivoted, let us say, on points, at some distance from each other. Touch one of the magnets and set it swinging,—the other begins to swing slightly, too. Once more, a disturbance has travelled from one to the other, but the medium in this case is by no means obvious. It is nothing solid, liquid, or gaseous; that much is certain. Whether it is material or not depends partly on what we mean by "material"—partly requires more knowledge before a satisfactory answer can be given. We do, however, know something of the medium operative in this case, and we call it the Ether—the Ether of Space.

In these cases the intensity of the response varies rapidly with distance, and at a sufficiently great distance no response would be perceptible.

This may be hastily set down as a natural consequence of a physical medium of communication, and a physical or mechanical disturbance ; but it is not quite so.

Consider a couple of telephones connected properly by wires. They are sympathetic, and if one is tapped the other receives a shock. Speaking popularly, whatever is said to one is repeated by the other, and distance is practically unimportant ; at any rate, there is no simple law of inverse square, or any such kind of law ; there is a definite channel for the disturbance between the two.

The real medium of communication, I may say parenthetically, is still the ether.

Once more, take a mirror, pivoted on an axle, and capable of slight motion. At a distance let there be a suitable receiving instrument, say a drum of photographic paper and a lens. If the sun is shining on the mirror, and everything properly arranged, a line may be drawn by it on the paper miles away, and every tilt given to the mirror shall be reproduced as a kink in the line. And this may go on over great distances ; no wire, or anything else commonly called " material " connecting the two stations, nothing but a beam of sunlight, a peculiar state of the ether.

So far we have been dealing with mere physics. Now poach a little on the ground of physiology. Take two brains, as like as possible, say belonging to two similar animals ; place them a certain distance apart, with no known or obvious means of communication, and see if there is any sympathetic link between them. Apply a stimulus to one, and observe whether the other in any way responds ? To make the experiment conveniently, it is best to avail oneself of the entire animal, and not of its brain alone. It is then easy to stimulate one of the brains through any of the creature's peripheral sense organs, and it may be possible to detect

whatever effect is excited in the other brain by some motor impulse, some muscular movement of the corresponding animal.

So far as I know the experiment has hitherto been principally tried on man. This has certain advantages and certain disadvantages. The main advantage is that the motor result of intelligent speech is more definite and instructive than mere pawings and gropings or twitchings. The main disadvantage is that the liability to conscious deception and fraud becomes serious, much more serious than it is with a less cunning animal.

Of course it by no means follows that the experiment will succeed with a lower animal because it succeeds with man ; and I am not aware of its having been tried at present except with man.

One mode of trying the experiment would be to pinch or hurt one individual and see if the other can feel any pain. If he does feel anything he will probably twitch and rub, or he may become vocal with displeasure. There are two varieties of the experiment : First, with some manifest link or possible channel, as, for instance, where two individuals hold hands through a stuffed-up hole in a partition-wall ; and, second, with no such obvious medium, as when they are at a distance from one another.

Instead of simple pain in any part of the skin, one may stimulate the brain otherwise, by exciting some special sense organ ; for instance, those of taste or smell. Apply nauseous or pleasant materials to the palate of one individual and get the receptive person to describe the substance which the other is tasting.

Experiments of this kind are mentioned above, and they have had a fair measure of positive result. But I am not asking for credence concerning specific facts at present. A serious amount of study is necessary before one is in a position to criticise any statement of fact. What I am concerned to show is that such experiments are not, on the face of them, absurd ; that they are experiments which ought to be made ; and that any result actually obtained, if definite and clear, ought to be



gradually and cautiously accepted, whether it be positive or negative.

So far I have supposed the stimulus to be applied to the nerves of touch, or more generally the skin nerves, and to the taste nerves; but we may apply a stimulus equally well to the nerves of hearing, or of smelling, or of seeing. An experiment with a sound or a smell stimulus, however, is manifestly not very crucial unless the intervening distance between A and B is excessive; but a sight stimulus can be readily confined within narrow limits of space. Thus, a picture can be held up in front of the eyes of A, and B can be asked if he sees anything; and if he does, he can be told either to describe it or to draw it.

If the picture or diagram thus shown to A is one that has only just been drawn by the responsible experimenter himself; if it is one that has no simple name that can be signalled; if A is not allowed to touch B, or to move during the course of the experiment, and has never seen the picture before; if, by precaution of screening, rays from the picture can be positively asserted never to have entered the eyes of B; and if, nevertheless, B describes himself as "seeing" it, however dimly, and is able to draw it, in dead silence on the part of all concerned; then, I say, the experiment would be a good one.

But not yet would it be conclusive. We must consider who A and B are.

If they are a pair of persons who go about together, and make money out of the exhibition; if they are in any sense a brace of professionals accustomed to act together, I deny that anything is solidly proved by such an experiment; for cunning is by no means an improbable hypothesis.

Cunning takes such a variety of forms that it is tedious to discuss them; it is best to eliminate it altogether. That can be done by using unassorted individuals in unaccustomed rooms. True, the experiment may thus become much more difficult, if not indeed quite impossible. Two entirely different tuning

forks will not respond. Two strangers are not usually sympathetic, in the ordinary sense of that word ; perhaps we ought not to expect a response. Nevertheless, the experiment must be made ; and if B is found able to respond, not only to  $A_1$ , but also to  $A_2$ ,  $A_3$ , and other complete strangers, under the conditions already briefly mentioned, the experiment may be regarded as satisfactory. I am prepared to assert that such satisfactory experiments have been made.

But the power of response in this way to the uninteresting impression of strangers does not appear to be a common faculty. The number of persons who can act efficiently as B is *apparently* very limited. But I do not make this assertion with any confidence, for so few people have as yet been seriously tried. It is most likely a question of degree. All shades of responsiveness may exist, from nearly 0 to something considerable.

More experiments are wanted. They are not difficult to try, and sufficient variety may be introduced to prevent the observations from being too deplorably dull. They are, I confess, rather dull.

Before considering them satisfactory or publishing them it would be well to call in the assistance of a trained observer, who may be able to suggest further precautions ; but at first it is probably well to choose fairly easy conditions.

Relations are probably more likely to succeed than are strangers ; persons who feel a sympathy with each other, who are accustomed to imagine they know what the other is thinking of, or to say things simultaneously, and such like vague traditions as are common in most families : such individuals as these would naturally be the most likely ones to begin with, until experiment shows otherwise. The A power seems common enough ; the B power, so far as I know, is rather rare—at least to a prominent extent.

It is customary to call A the agent and B the per-  
cipient, but there may be some objection to these names.

The name agent suggest activity ; and it is a distinct question whether any conscious activity is necessary.

Sender and receiver are terms that might be used, but they labour under similar and perhaps worse objections. For the present let us simply use the terms A and B, which involve no hypothesis whatever.

A may be likened to the sending microphone or transmitter; B to the receiving telephone.

A to the sounded fork or quivering magnet, B to the responsive one.

A to the flashing mirror, B to the sensitive sheet.

But observe that in all the cases hitherto mentioned a third person is mentioned too, the experimenter, C. A and B are regarded as mere tools, instruments, apparatus, for C to make his experiments with.

Both are passive till C comes and excites the nerve of A, either by pinching him, or by putting things in his mouth, or by showing him diagrams or objects; and B is then supposed to respond to A. It may be objected that he is really responding to C all the time. Yes, indeed, that may sometimes be so, and it is a distinct possibility to remember. If something that C is unconsciously looking at is described by B, instead of the object which is set in front of A, the experiment will seem a failure. There are many such possibilities to bear in mind in so novel a region of research.

But now I want to go on and point out that C is not essential. He probably is not an assistance at all, very likely he is an obstruction, even if he is a serious and well-intentioned being. But if D, E, F are present too as irresponsible spectators, talking or fidgeting, or even sitting still and thinking, the conditions are bad. One can never be sure what F is doing, he may be simply playing the fool. An experiment conducted in front of a large audience is scientifically useless.

Whenever I use the term thought-transference I never mean anything like public performances, whether by genuine persons or impostors. The human race is so constituted that such performances have their value—they incite others to try experiments; but in themselves, and speaking scientifically, public performances are useless, and except when of an exceptionally high

order—as they were in the case of the Zancigs—they often tend to obscure a phenomenon by covering it with semi-legitimate contempt.

I fear that some hypnotic exhibitions in the past were objectionable; in so far as they were conducted, not to advance science, but to exhibit some well known fact again and again, not even to students, but to an idle gaping crowd. The obstructive incredulity of the medical profession—also in the past—seemed to render such demonstrations unfortunately necessary.

To return, however, to A and B: let us suppose them left alone, not stimulated by any third person; it is quite possible for A to combine the functions of C with his own functions, and to stimulate himself. He may look at a picture or a playing card, or he may taste a substance, or he may, if he can, simply think of a number, or a scene, or an event, and, so to speak, keep it vividly in his mind. It may happen that B will be able to describe the scene of which A is thinking, sometimes almost correctly, sometimes with a large admixture of error, or at least of dimness.

The experiment is virtually the same as those above mentioned, and may be made quite a good one; the only weak part is that, under the circumstances, everything depends on the testimony of A, and A is not always believed.

This is, after all, a disability which he shares with C; and, at any rate, he is able to convince *himself* by such experiments, provided they are successful.

But now go a step further. Let A and B be not thinking of experimenting at all. Let them be at a distance from one another, and going about their ordinary vocations, including somnolence and the other passive as well as active occupations of the twenty-four hours. Let us, however, not suppose them strangers, but relatives or intimate friends. Now let something vividly excite A; let him fall down a cliff, or be run over by a horse, or fall into a river; or let him be taken violently ill, or be subject to some strong emotion; or let him be at the point of death.

Is it not conceivable that if any such sympathetic connexion between individuals as I have been postulating exists,—if a paltry stimulus supplied by a third person is capable in the slightest degree of conveying itself from one individual to another,—is it not conceivable or even probable that a violent stimulus, such as we have supposed A to receive, may be able to induce in B, even though inattentive and otherwise occupied, some dim echo, reverberation, response, and cause him to be more or less aware that A is suffering or perturbed. If B is busy, self-absorbed, actively engaged, he may notice nothing. If he happen to be quiescent, vacant, moody, or half or whole asleep, he may realise and be conscious of something. He may perhaps only feel a vague sense of depression in general; or he may feel the depression and associate it definitely with A; or he may be more distinctly aware of what is happening, and call out that A has had a fall, or an accident, or is being drowned, or is ill; or he may have a specially vivid dream which will trouble him long after he wakes, and may be told to other persons, and written down; or he may think he hears A's voice; or, lastly, he may conjure up an image of A so vividly before his "mind's eye" that he may be able to persuade himself and others that he has seen his apparition:—sometimes a mere purposeless phantom, sometimes in a "setting" of a sort of vision or picture of an event not unlike what is at the time elsewhere really happening.

The Society for Psychical Research have, with splendid perseverance and diligence, undertaken and carried forward the thankless labour of receiving and sifting a great mass of testimony to phenomena such as I have hinted at. They have published some of them in two large volumes, called *Phantasms of the Living*. Fresh evidence comes in every month. The evidence is so cumulative, and some of it is so well established, as to bear down the dead wall of scepticism in all those who have submitted to the drudgery of a study of the material. The evidence induces belief. It is not yet copious enough to lead to a valid induction.

I cannot testify to these facts as I can to the simple experiments where I have acted the part of C. Evidence for spontaneous or involuntary thought-transference must obviously depend on statements received from A and from B, as well as from other persons, some in the neighbourhood of A, others in the neighbourhood of B, together with contemporary newspaper reports, *Times* obituaries, and other past documents relating to matters of fact, which are available for scrutiny, and may be regarded as trustworthy.

I am prepared, however, to confess that the weight of testimony is sufficient to satisfy my own mind that such things do undoubtedly occur; that the distance between England and India is no barrier to the sympathetic communication of intelligence in some way of which we are at present ignorant; that, just as a signalling key in London causes a telegraphic instrument to respond instantaneously in Teheran,—which is an every-day occurrence,—so the danger or death of a distant child, or brother, or husband, may be signalled, without wire or telegraph clerk, to the heart of a human being fitted to be the recipient of such a message.

We call the process telepathy—sympathy at a distance; we do not understand it. What is the medium of communication? Is it through the air, like the tuning forks; or through the ether, like the magnets; or is it something non-physical, and exclusively psychical? No one as yet can tell you. We must know far more about it before we can answer that question,—perhaps before we can be sure whether the question has a meaning or not.

Undoubtedly, the scientific attitude, after being forced to admit the fact, is to assume a physical medium, and to discover it and its processes if possible. When the attempt has failed, it will be time enough to enter upon fresh hypotheses.

Meanwhile we must say plainly that telepathy strikes us as a spontaneous occurrence of that intercommunication between mind and mind, which for want of a better term we at present style thought-transference.

The transmission does not appear to me to be a physical process between brain and brain. I think it a psychical one between mind and mind : and that the excitation of the brain of the percipient is indirect.

Spontaneously occurring impressions can be artificially and experimentally imitated by conscious attempts to produce them. Individuals are known who can by an effort of will somehow excite the brain or sensorium of another person at a moderate distance,—say in another part of the same town, or even in some distant place,—so that this second person imagines that he hears a call or sees a face.

These are called experimental apparitions, and appear well established. These experiments also want repeating. They require care, obviously ; but they are very valuable pieces of evidence, and must contribute immensely to experimental psychology.

What now is the meaning of this unexpected sympathetic resonance, this syntonic reverberation between minds ? Is it conceivably the germ of a new sense, as it were,—something which the human race is, in the progress of evolution, destined to receive in fuller measure ? or is it the relic of a faculty possessed by our animal ancestry before speech was ?

I have no wish to intrude speculations upon you, and I cannot answer these questions except in terms of speculation. I wish to assert nothing but what I believe to be solid and verifiable facts.

Let me, however, point out that the intercommunion of minds, the exciting in the brain of B a thought possessed by A, is after all a very ordinary and well known process. We have a quantity of well-arranged mechanism to render it possible. The human race has advanced far beyond the animal in the development of this mechanism ; and civilised man has advanced beyond savages. Conceivably, by thus developing the mechanism, we may have begun to lose the spontaneous and really simpler form of the power ; but the power, with mechanism, conspicuously exists.

I whisper a secret to A, and a short time afterwards

I find that B is perfectly aware of it. It sometimes happens so. It has probably happened in what we are accustomed to consider a very commonplace fashion ; A has told him. When you come to analyse the process, however, it is not really at all simple. I will not go into tedious details ; but when you remember that what conveyed the thought was the impalpable compressions and dilatations of a gas, and that in the process of transmission it existed for a finite space of time in this intermediate and curiously mechanical condition, you may realise something of puzzlement in the process. I am not sure but that we ought to consider some direct sympathy between two minds, without this mechanical process, as really a more simple and direct mode of conveying an idea. Pass on to another illustration.

Tell a secret to A, in New Zealand, and discover that B, in Petrograd, is before long aware of it, neither having travelled. How can that happen ? That is not possible to a savage ; it would seem to him mysterious. It is mysterious in reality. The idea existed for a time in the form of black scrawls on a bit of paper, which travelled between the two places. A transfer of material occurred, not an aerial vibration ; the piece of paper held in front of B's eyes excited in him the idea or knowledge of fact which you had communicated to A.

Not even a material transfer is necessary however ; no matter flows along a telegraph wire, and the air is undisturbed by an electric current, but thought-transference through the etherial medium (with, or indeed without, the help of a telegraph or telephone wire) is an accomplished fact, though it would have puzzled our ancestors of last century. And yet it is not really new, it is only the distance and perfection of it that is new. We all possess an etherial receiving instrument, in our organ of vision. The old semaphore system of signalling, as well as the heliograph method, is really a utilisation of the ether for this kind of thought-transference. Much information, sometimes of momentous character, may be conveyed by a wink or nod ; or even by a look. These also are messages sent through the ether. The



eye is affected by disturbances arriving through the ether, and by those alone.

Now, then, I say, shut the eyes, stop the ears, transmit no material substance, interpose distance sufficient to stop all pushing and pulling. Can thought or ideas still be transmitted? Experiment answers that they can. But what the medium is, and how the process occurs, it remains for further investigation to ascertain.

We reduced our initial three individuals to two; we can reduce the two to one. It is possible for the A and B functions to be apparently combined in one individual. Some practice seems necessary for this, and it is a curious state of things. It seems assisted by staring at an object such as a glass globe or crystal—a slight amount of self-hypnotism probably. Then you see visions and receive impressions, or sometimes your hand works unconsciously, as if one part of your brain was signalling to another part, and your own identity was dormant or complexed for a time. But in these cases of so-called automatic writing, crystal vision, trance-utterance, clairvoyance, and the like, are we quite sure whether it is a case of A and B at all; and, if so, whether the subject before us is really acting as both? I am not sure; I distinctly doubt it in some cases. It is possible that the clairvoyant is responding to some unknown world-mind of which he forms a part: that the real agent is neither himself nor any other living person. This possibility must not be ignored in ordinary cases of apparent thought-transference, too.

Well, now, take a further step. Suppose I discover a piece of paper with scrawls on it. I may guess they are intended for something, but as they are to me illegible hieroglyphics, I carry it to one person after another, and get them to look at it; but it excites in them no response. They perceive little more than a savage would perceive. But not so with all of them. One man to whom I show it has the perceptive faculty, so to speak; he becomes excited; he begins to sing; he rushes for an arrangement of wood and catgut, and fills the air with vibrations. Even the others can now faintly

appreciate the meaning. The piece of paper was a lost manuscript of Beethoven !

What sort of thought-transference is that ? Where is the A to whom the ideas originally occurred ? He has been dead for years ; his fossilised thought has lain dormant in matter ; but it only wanted a sympathetic and educated mind to perceive it, to revive it, and to make it the property of the world. Idea, do I call it ? but it is not only idea : there may be a world of emotion too, thus stored up in matter, ready to be released as by detent. Action of mind on matter, reaction of matter on mind—are these things, after all, commonplaces too ?

If so what is not possible ?

Here is a room where a tragedy occurred, where the human spirit was strung to intensest anguish. Is there any trace of that agony present still and able to be appreciated by an attuned or receptive mind ? I assert nothing, except that it is not inconceivable. If it happen, it may take many forms ; vague disquiet, perhaps, or imaginary sounds or vague visions, or perhaps a dream or picture of the event as it occurred. Understand, I do not regard the evidence for these things as so conclusive as for some of the other phenomena I have dealt with, but the belief in such facts may be forced upon us, and you perceive that the garment of superstition is already dropping from them. They will take their place, if true, in an orderly universe, along with other not wholly unallied and already well known occurrences.

Relics again : is it credible that a relic, a lock of hair, an old garment, retains any trace of a deceased friend—represents any portion of his personality ? Does not an old letter ? Does not a painting ? An " old master " we call it. Aye, there may be much of the personality of the old master thus preserved. Is not the emotion felt on looking at it a kind of thought-transference from the departed ? A painting differs from a piece of music in that it is constantly incarnate, so to speak. It is there for all to see, for some to understand. The music requires incarnation, it can be " performed " as we say, and

then it can be appreciated. But in no case without the attuned and thoughtful mind ; and so these things are, in a sense, thought-transference, but deferred thought-transference. They may be likened to telepathy not only reaching over tracts of space but deferred through epochs of time.<sup>1</sup>

Think over these great things and be not unduly sceptical about little things. An attitude of keen and critical inquiry must continually be maintained, and in that sense any amount of scepticism is not only legitimate but necessary. The kind of scepticism I deprecate is not that which sternly questions and rigorously probes, it is rather that which confidently asserts and dogmatically denies ; but this kind is not true scepticism, in the proper sense of the word, for it deters inquiry and forbids inspection. It is too positive concerning the boundaries of knowledge and the line where superstition begins.

Phantasms and dreams and ghosts, crystal-gazing, premonitions, and clairvoyance : the region of superstition ? Yes, hitherto, but possibly also the region of fact. As taxes on credulity they are trifles compared to things with which we are already familiar ; only too familiar, for our familiarity has made us stupidly and inanely inappreciative of them.

The whole of our knowledge and existence is shrouded in mystery : the commonplace is itself full of marvel, and the business of science is to overcome the forces of superstition by enlisting them in the service of genuine knowledge. And when this is done I do not doubt that some of these forces will be found auxiliary to the sacred cause of religion itself.

## END OF SECTION II.

<sup>1</sup> They are not technical telepathy, as defined, of course, because they occur through accustomed ways and processes. Technical telepathy is the attainment of the same result through unaccustomed ways and processes.

SECTION III  
SPONTANEOUS TELEPATHY AND  
CLAIRVOYANCE

CHAPTER VII

APPARITIONS CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF TELEPATHY

THE fact of telepathy having been experimentally established by a large number of experiments conducted by different people, it remains to consider more fully its bearing and significance.

Telepathy means the apparently direct action of one mind on another by means unknown to science. That a thought or image or impression or emotion in the mind of one person can arouse a similar impression in the mind of another person sufficiently sympathetic and sufficiently at leisure to attend and record the impression, is now proved. But the mechanism whereby it is done, or even if there is anything that can be likened to physical mechanism at all, is still unknown. The appearance is as if it were a direct action of mind on mind, or possibly, but not probably, of brain on brain, irrespective of the usual nerves and muscles and organs of sense.

This fact alone—once admitted, after having run the traditional gauntlet of scepticism—serves to explain, at least in a plausible and tentative manner, a number of puzzling phenomena; notably it furnishes a plausible key to the phenomena of apparitions and hallucinations of every kind, whether of sight or of hearing or of touch. It is of especial value in reducing the rudimentary difficulty about the clothes and accessories of so-called

"ghosts" to absurdity; since of course a mental impression would represent a person under something like customary, though it may be unexpected, surroundings,—just as happens in an ordinary dream.

The word "hallucination" applied to phantasmal appearances in general has been objected to in connexion with some of these apparitions; as if it were intended to imply—as it is often mistakenly assumed to imply—that there is no objective reality underlying the apparition whatever. It is, however, fully admitted that some hallucinations may be and indeed are *veridical* (*i.e.* truth-telling); inasmuch as they correspond with some real event, some strong emotion,—due perhaps to an accident or to the illness or decease of the distant and visualised person. They therefore do correspond with some objective reality, just as the image in a looking-glass corresponds with and is veridical evidence of some objective reality. But as to any substantiality about a phantasm—that must be regarded as demanding further investigation. Hypothetically it may differ in different cases; and in no case can it be safe to assume, without special evidence, that it has anything more than a psychological basis.

The question of photography applied to visible phantasms, and to an invisible variety said to be perceived by clairvoyants, is still an open one—at any rate no photographic evidence has yet appeared conclusive to me. If successful, photography could prove that the impression was not only a mental one, but that the ether of space had been definitely affected in a certain way also, so that the impression had probably become received by the optical apparatus of the eye, and had been transmitted in the usual way to the brain. It would not prove substantiality; since of course it is perfectly easy to photograph the virtual image formed by a looking-glass. Still, genuine photography would indicate a step in advance of telepathy: it would establish one variety of what are called "physical phenomena." There is, in truth, a vast amount of evidence for physical phenomena of this technically

supernormal kind ; but they have not yet made good their claim to clear and positive acceptance in the way that telepathy has done.

But we are at present not attending to physical phenomena. We need not assume that an apparition has any objective or physical reality. It may be only an impression on the mind of a percipient, analogous to the image or impression caused in one person while another is endeavouring to transfer the image of an object. That which experimentally is found to occur of conscious purpose we think may sometimes occur unconsciously too. We are not sure indeed that the consciousness or will-power of the agent has anything to do with it ; the transfer is effected we know not how, and it may be wholly an affair of the subconsciousness. If so, a strong emotion even in a distant person may produce an echo or reverberation in the mind of a relative or even a synpathetic stranger, without the agent being in the least conscious of what is happening, and without the percipient in the least understanding the process. He may think that the impression in the mind is real, and may only be undeceived by trying to touch it, or he may perceive that it is no more real than the image in a looking-glass,—or not so real as that,—and yet may feel certain that it corresponds to some sort of psychical reality somewhere.

In that case the impression is called veridical or truth-telling, because it does convey real information, though it does so in a phantasmal or unreal manner. Hallucinations need not necessarily be unreal or phantasmal in every case : that is a matter for further investigation, but it does assuredly clear the ground to treat them as such in the first instance.

### PHANTASMS

Examples of apparitions seen by relatives at or very near to the epoch of death are so common that it is hardly worth while to quote any here. The publications

of the Society for Psychical Research and the book called *Phantasms of the Living* are full of them ; and in most assemblages it will be found that a few of those present are aware of cases of this kind in their own family history.

Part of the scepticism which has surrounded the subject has been undoubtedly due to the difficult notions which are rendered necessary if those apparitions are to be supposed objective realities. Even supposing a human being could thus appear, the apparition of his clothes and simplest accessories are puzzling if the appearance were objectively real. Sometimes such figures are seen accompanied by animals, sometimes with their surroundings lightly sketched in as it were, —as for instance part of a ship in the case of a sailor. All these difficulties sink into non-existence directly it is apprehended that the vision is a mental impression produced by a psychical agency, veridical in the sense of corresponding to reality more or less closely, but subjective in the sense of there being no actual bodily presence. This is the kind of rationalising theory on which the Society for Psychical Research started its existence : it must have been the hope of similarly detecting an element of common sense running through a great variety of popular legend that conferred on its pioneers the motive power necessary. Anyhow that was their adopted theory, and accordingly all such apparitions were in the first instance supposed to be due to telepathy from the dying person and were called *Phantasms of the Living*.

The following is an extract from a Report of one of the Committees :—" There is a strong testimony that *clairvoyants* have witnessed and described trivial incidents in which they had no special interest, and even scenes in which the actors, though actual persons, were complete strangers to them ; and such cases seem properly assimilated to those where they describe mere places and objects, the idea of which can hardly be supposed to be impressed on them by any personality

at all. Once more, apparitions at death, though the fact of death sufficiently implies excitement or disturbance in one mind, have often been witnessed, not only by relatives or friends, in a normal state but interested in the event—a case above considered—but by other observers who had no personal interest in the matter.

“To secure testimony on these topics we have had to depend on the co-operation of the public, and we have sought far and wide for trustworthy testimony, which we have tested in a stringent manner, never resting satisfied until by inquiry and pertinacious cross-examination, with an examination of contemporary records of various kinds, we have made as sure as is humanly possible that our witnesses were neither lying nor drawing unduly on their imagination, but that the event happened pretty much as they have narrated or at the time recorded them.”

“Phantasms of the Dying” might be a better name for these very numerous cases of apparition or veridical hallucination. Whatever the cause, the fact of their existence has been thoroughly established; there is a concordance far beyond chance between apparitions which convey the impression of the unexpected death or illness of a distant person, and the actual fact;—the intelligence being, in this form, impressed on a percipient at a distance, by some apparently unconscious mental activity and by means at present unknown.

### ABBREVIATED EXAMPLES

As an instance of a vision with appropriate accessories I might take a case reported more fully in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, vol. iii., page 97—the case of a favourite and devoted Scottish workman who appeared to his employer in what is described as an extraordinarily vivid dream in which the workman appeared with a face of “indescribable bluish pale colour and on his forehead spots like blots of sweat,” and earnestly said several times that he had not done the thing which he was accused of doing. When asked what this was, he replied impressively “Ye’ll sune ken.” Almost immediately



afterwards the news of this man's suicide arrived. But the employer felt assured on the strength of his vision that, though dead, the man had not committed suicide ; and said so. Before long it turned out that his assurance was correct, for the workman had drunk from a bottle containing nitric acid by accident. The employer moreover subsequently ascertained that the symptoms exhibited by the phantasmal appearance were such as are appropriate to poisoning by this liquid.

Another case of vision with more detailed accessories is in vol. vii., page 33, communicated by Dr. Hodgson, and may be abbreviated thus :—

Mrs. Paquet on the morning of October 24th, 1889, after her husband had gone to work and the children to school, feeling gloomy, was making some tea for herself, when she saw a vision of her brother, Edmund Dunn, standing only a few feet away ; and her report continues :—

" The apparition stood with back toward me, or rather, partially so, and was in the act of falling forward—away from me—seemingly impelled by two ropes or a loop of rope drawing against his legs. The vision lasted but a moment, disappearing over a low railing or bulwark, but was very distinct. I dropped the tea, clasped my hands to my face, and exclaimed, ' My God ! Ed. is drowned.'

" At about half-past ten a.m. my husband received a telegram from Chicago announcing the drowning of my brother. When he arrived home, he said to me, ' Ed. is sick in hospital at Chicago ; I have just received a telegram,' to which I replied ' Ed. is drowned ; I saw him go overboard.' I then gave him a minute description of what I had seen. I stated that my brother, as I saw him, was bareheaded, had on a heavy, blue sailor's shirt, no coat, and that he went over the rail or bulwark. I noticed that his pants' legs were rolled up enough to show the white lining inside. I also described the appearance of the boat at the point where my brother went overboard.

" I am not nervous, and neither before nor since have I had any experience in the least degree similar to that above related.

" My brother was not subject to fainting or vertigo.

" AGNES PAQUET "

#### MR. PAQUET'S STATEMENT

" At about 10.30 o'clock a.m., October 24th, 1889, I received a telegram from Chicago announcing the drowning of my brother-in-law, Edmund Dunn, at 3 o'clock that morning. I went directly home, and wishing to break the force of the sad news I had to convey to my wife, I said to her : ' Ed. is sick in hospital at Chicago ; I have just received a telegram.' To which she

replied : ' Ed. is drowned ; I saw him go overboard.' She then described to me the appearance and dress of her brother as described in her statement, also the appearance of the boat, etc.

" I started at once for Chicago, and when I arrived there I found the appearance of that part of the vessel described by my wife to be exactly as she had described it, though she had never seen the vessel ; and the crew verified my wife's description of her brother's dress, etc., except that they thought he had his hat on at the time of the accident. They said that Mr. Dunn had purchased a pair of pants a few days before the accident occurred, and as they were a trifle long, wrinkling at the knees, he had worn them rolled up, showing the white lining as seen by my wife."

#### STATEMENT OF ACCIDENT

" On October 24th, 1889, Edmund Dunn, brother of Mrs. Agnes Paquet, was serving as fireman on the tug Wolf, a small steamer engaged in towing vessels in Chicago harbour. At about three o'clock a.m., the tug fastened to a vessel, inside the piers, to tow her up the river. While adjusting the tow-line Mr. Dunn fell, or was thrown overboard by the tow-line, and drowned."

In this case, if 3 a.m. signifies Chicago time, the vision must have followed the accident very closely ; but it has gradually become clear that some of these cases do not coincide precisely with the epoch of death, but follow it sometimes at so long an interval that another group has to be classified as " Phantasms of the Dead." (See Mrs. Sidgwick's Memoir on the subject in *Proceedings*, vol. iii.)

Again occasionally the hallucinations are collective, so that several people present see the same vision. It is possible to consider these as cases of contagious hallucination ; and it is not usually necessary to suppose that the distant person whose image was being seen knew anything about it or was making any conscious effort to communicate.

If indeed he *were* conscious of the attempt, still more if he knew of its success and reception, it would be a feature of greatly added interest ; it would then fall into the class of reciprocal cases—which are rarer.

## EXPERIMENTAL APPARITIONS

The fact that such visions can also be produced through the agency of living people—even in health—was proved by the experiments conducted by Mr. S. H. B., as recorded in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., pp. 104-9, and in *Human Personality*, vol. i. p. 293. This gentleman willed himself or rather his phantom to appear to two ladies, without their knowing of the experiment; and he succeeded in his intention. They both saw him simultaneously, though he did not see them; and his appearance was as of one in evening dress wandering aimlessly about their room, after the traditional manner of "ghosts." This experimental production of a ghost is a particularly instructive case; and many ghostly appearances belong to living people, who are usually unconscious that they are producing any such effect. There appears to be no reason why an apparition should always be of a deceased person. But whether every apparition is of this unsubstantial and purely subjective order, or whether a few proceed to a further degree of reality and belong to what are sometimes spoken of as incipient materialisation, I do not at this stage even discuss. It is sufficient to indicate that a true hypothesis does not close the door to other and more extended theories, if the first working hypothesis is found incompetent to explain all the facts.

For the convenient analogy of conscious and purposed Thought-transference must not be pressed too far. Our phenomena break through any attempt to group them under heads of purposely transferred impression; and the words *Teleesthesia* and *Telepathy* were introduced by Mr. Myers to cover all cases of impression received at a distance without the normal operation of the recognised sense organs.

These general terms are found of permanent service; but as regards what is for the present included under them, we must limit and arrange our material rather

with an eye to convenience, than with any belief that our classification will ultimately prove a fundamental one. No true demarcation, in fact, can as yet be made between one class of those experiences and another; we need the record of as many and as diverse phenomena as we can get, if we are to be in a position to deal satisfactorily with any one of them.

The popular term "ghost" may cover a wide range of essentially different phenomena, and the hallucinatory but veridical kind of apparition, which has no close connexion with any particular *place*, is the best established and commonest variety.

#### HAUNTINGS

The kind of ghost associated with a place—say a room,—and seen by any one who happens to sleep in that room, provided he is fairly wakeful and not too case-hardened against weird influences, constitutes a difficult and at present somewhat unsatisfactory region of inquiry; the evidence for the existence of this "fixed local" kind of apparition is strong, but hardly conclusive; and this kind is not included among those called "phantasms of the living" nor among hallucinations due to telepathy from the injured or dying.

The Society has not had the opportunity of investigating so-called haunted houses in any considerable number; and many of such cases—even when reported—resolve themselves merely into uncanny noises such as may be accounted for in one of a great many different ways. I would not be understood as expressing any negative opinion as to the actual occurrence of this class of phantom—our study of it as yet has been insufficient, though it is growing,—but of the occurrence of visions which coincide fairly in time with some severe shock to the person represented, it is impossible for me to entertain a doubt. The evidence must certainly depend on human testimony, but immense trouble has been taken

to collect such testimony over a wide range of persons, to sift and examine and test it by every means in our power, and then to record it in volumes accessible to the public. Those who have been chiefly occupied for years in this work are able to testify concerning it as follows :—

“ We have thus accumulated a great body of testimony which it is impossible to overlook or to discard. These facts form a foundation for the beginning of knowledge concerning them.

“ Our evidence is no shifting shadow, which it may be left to individual taste or temperament to interpret, but more resembles a solid mass seen in twilight which men may indeed avoid stumbling over, but only by resolutely walking away from it. And when the *savant* thus deserts the field, the ordinary man needs to have the nature and true amount of the testimony far more directly brought home to him, than is necessary in realms already mastered by specialists to whose *dicta* he may defer. Failing this direct contact with the facts, the vaguely fascinated regard of the ordinary public is, for all scientific purposes, as futile as the *savant's* determined avoidance. Knowledge can never grow until it is realised that the question ‘ Do you believe in these things ? ’ is puerile unless it has been preceded by the inquiry, ‘ What do you know about them ? ’

“ For, in fact, this subject is at present very much in the position which zoology and botany occupied in the time of Aristotle, or nosology in the time of Hippocrates. Aristotle had no zoological gardens or methodical treatises to refer to ; he was obliged to go down to the fish-market, to hear whatever the sailors could tell, and look at whatever they could bring him. This spirit of omnivorous inquiry no doubt exposed him to hearing much that was exaggerated or untrue ; but plainly the science of zoology could not have been upbuilt without it. Diseases afford a still more striking parallel to the phenomena of which we are in quest. Men of science are wont to make it an objection to this quest that

phenomena cannot be reproduced under our own conditions or at our own time. The looseness of thought here exhibited by men ordinarily clear-headed is surely a striking example of the prepotence of prejudice over education. Will the objectors assert that all aberrations of function and degenerations of tissue are reproducible by direct experiment? Can physicians secure a case of cancer or Addison's disease by any previous arrangement of conditions? Our science is by no means the only one concerned with phenomena which are at present to a large extent irreproducible: all the sciences of life are still within that category, and all sciences whatever were in it once."

## CHAPTER VIII

### TELEPATHY FROM AN IMMATERIAL REGION

THE phenomenon upon a consideration of which we shall shortly enter is that exhibited in several forms and known under various names, of which the simplest perhaps is *automatic writing*—that is, writing executed independently of the full knowledge and consciousness of the operator—the hand acting in obedience either to some unconscious portion of the operator's mind, or else responding to some other psychical influence more or less distinct from both his normal and his hypernormal personality. Sometimes it takes the form not of writing, but of subconscious speech; and occasionally the person whose hand or voice is being used is himself completely entranced and unconscious for one or two hours together. There is evidently a great deal to be learned about this phenomenon, and many surmises are legitimate respecting it, but it is useless and merely ignorant to deny its occurrence. It is often quite clear that parts of the writings or speech so obtained do not represent the normal knowledge of the automatist; but whence the information is derived is

uncertain, and probably in different cases the source is different. The simplest assumption, and one that covers perhaps a majority of the facts, is that the writer's unconscious intelligence or subliminal self—his dream or genius stratum—is at work—that he is in a condition of unconscious and subliminal lucidity, or subject to a sort of hyperæsthesia.

It has long been known that in order to achieve remarkable results in any department of intellectual activity, the mind must be to some extent unaware of passing occurrences. To be keenly awake and "on the spot" is a highly valued accomplishment, and for the ordinary purposes of mundane affairs is a far more useful state of mind than the rather hazy and absorbed condition which is associated with the quality of mind called genius; but it is not as effective for brilliant achievement.

When a poet or musician or mathematician feels himself inspired, his senses are—at least his commonplace and non-relevant attention is—dulled or half asleep; and though probably some part of his brain is in a state of great activity, I am not aware of any experiments directed to test which that part is, nor whether, when in that state, any of the more ordinarily used portions are really dormant or no. It would be interesting, but difficult, to ascertain the precise physiological accompaniments of that which on a small scale is called a brown study, and on a larger scale a period of inspiration.

It does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the state is somewhat allied to the initial condition of anæsthesia—the somnambulic condition in which, though the automatic processes of the body go on with greater perfection than usual, the conscious or noticing aspect of the mind is latent, so that the things which influence the person are apparently no longer the ordinary events which affect his peripheral organs, but either something internal, or else something not belonging to the ordinarily known physical universe at all.

The mind is always in a receptive state, perhaps,

but whereas the business-like wide-awake person receives impressions from every trivial detail of his physical surroundings, the half-asleep person seems to receive impressions from a different stratum altogether ; higher in some instances, lower in some instances, but different always from those received by ordinary men in their every-day state.

In a man of genius the state comes on of itself, and the results are astounding. There are found occasionally feeble persons, usually young, who seek to attain to the appearance of genius by the easy process of assuming or encouraging an attitude of vacancy and uselessness. There may be all grades of result attained while in this state, and the state itself is of less than no value unless it is justified by the results.

By experiment and observation it has now been established that a state not altogether dissimilar to this can be induced by artificial means, *e.g.*, by drugs, by hypnosis, by crystal gazing, by purposed inattention ; and also that a receptive or clairvoyant condition occurs occasionally without provocation, during sleep and during trance. All these states seem to some extent allied, and, as is well known, Mr. Myers has elaborated their relationship in his series of articles on the subliminal consciousness.

Well now, the question arises, What is the source of the intelligence manifested during epochs of clairvoyant lucidity, as sometimes experienced in the hypnotic or the somnambule state, or during trance, or displayed automatically ?

The most striking cases of which I am now immediately or mediately cognisant, are the trance state of Mrs. Piper and the automatism of such writers as Mrs. Verrall and Mrs. Holland. Without any apparent lulling of attention at all I am experimentally assured of the possibility of conveying information between one mind and another without the aid of ordinary sense organs ; but the cases mentioned are especially striking, and will serve to narrow the field to what, after all, may be considered at present the main points.



Mrs. Piper in the trance state is undoubtedly (I use the word in the strongest sense ; I have absolutely no more doubt on the subject than I have of my friends' ordinary knowledge of me and other men),—Mrs. Piper's trance personality is undoubtedly aware of much to which she has no kind of ordinarily recognised clue, and of which in her ordinary state she knows nothing. But how does she get this knowledge ? She herself when in the trance state asserts that she gets it by conversing—or, it may be, by telepathic communion—with the deceased friends and relatives of people present. And that this is a genuine opinion of hers, *i.e.* that the process feels like that to her unconscious or subconscious mind—the part of her which used to call itself Phinuit and now calls itself “ Rector ”—I am fully prepared to believe. But that does not carry us very far towards a knowledge of what the process actually is.

Conversation implies speaking with the mouth,—and when receiving or asking information she is momentarily in a deeper slumber, and not occupied in normal speech. At times, indeed, slight mutterings of one-sided questions and replies are heard, or are written, very like the mutterings of a person in sleep under-going a vivid dream.

Dream is certainly the ordinary person's nearest approach to the entranced condition ; and the fading of recollection as the conscious memory returns is also paralleled by the waking of Mrs. Piper out of the trance. But, instead of a nearly passive dream, it is more nearly allied to the somnambulic state ; though the activity, far from being chiefly locomotory, is mainly mental and only partially muscular.

She may be in a state of somnambulism in which mind is more active than body ; and the activity is so different from her ordinary activity, she is so distinctly a different sort of person, that she quite appropriately calls herself by another name.

It is natural to ask, Is she still herself ? But it is a question difficult to answer, unless “ herself ” be defined.

It is her mouth that is speaking, or her hand which is writing, and I suppose her brain and nerves are working the muscles ; but they are not worked in the customary way, nor does the mind manifested thereby at all resemble her mind. Until, however, the meaning of identity can be accurately specified, I find it difficult to discuss the question whether she or another person is really speaking.

On this point the waking experience of Mrs. Newnham—an automatic writer quoted in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i., p. 63—is of assistance. In her case the hand wrote matter not in the writer's mind and which she did not feel that she was writing. Her hand wrote while she was taking the attention of her own conscious mind away from her hand and letting it be guided by her subconscious or by some other mind.

The instructive feature about this case was that the minds apparently influencing the hand were not so much those of dead as of living people. The advantage of this was that they could be catechised afterwards about their share in the transaction ; and it then appeared that they either knew nothing about it or were surprised at it ; for though the communication did correspond to something in their minds, it did not represent anything of which they were consciously thinking, and was only a very approximate rendering of what they might be wishing to convey. They did not seem able to exercise control over the messages, any more than untrained people can control their thoughts in dreams. But we must not jump to the conclusion that this will always be the case ; that the connexion is *never* reciprocally conscious, as when two persons are talking ; but it shows that at any rate it need not be so. Since the living communicant is not aware of what is being dictated, so the dead person *need* not be consciously operative ; and thus conceivably the hand of the automatist may be influenced by minds other than his own, minds both living and dead (by one apparently as readily as by the other), but not always by a portion which is consciously active.

That this community of mind or possibility of distant interchange or one-sided reception of thoughts exists, is to me perfectly clear and certain. I venture further to say that persons who deny the bare fact, expressed as I here wish to express it without any hypothesis, are simply ignorant. They have not studied the facts of the subject. It may be for lack of opportunity, it may be for lack of inclination; they are by no means bound to investigate it unless they choose; but any dogmatic denials which such persons may now perpetrate will henceforth, or in the very near future, redound to the discredit, not of the phenomena thus ignorantly denied, but of themselves, the over-confident and presumptuous deniers.

We must not too readily assume that the apparent action of one mind on another is really such an action. The impression received *may* come from the ostensible agent, but it *may* come through a third person or messenger; or again it *may*, as some think more likely, come from a central mind—some Anima Mundi—to which all ordinary minds are related and by which they are influenced. If it could be shown that the action is a syntonetic or sympathetic connexion between a pair of minds, then it might be surmised that the action is a physical one, properly to be expressed as occurring directly between brain and brain, or body and body. On the other hand, the action may conceivably be purely psychological, and the distant brain may be stimulated not by the intervention of anything physical or material but in some more immediate manner,—from its psychological instead of from its physiological side.

The question is quite a definite one if properly expressed: Does the action take place through a physical medium, or does it not?

Guesses at *a priori* likelihood are worthless; if the question is to be answered it must be attacked experimentally.

Now the *ordinary* way in which A communicates with B is through a certain physical mechanism, and the thought of A may be said to exist for a finite time as an

etherial or aërial quiver before it reproduces a similar thought in the mind of B. We have got so accustomed to the existence of this intermediate physical process that instead of striking us as roundabout and puzzling it appeals to us as natural and simple; and any more direct action of A on B, without physical mechanism, is scouted as absurd or at least violently improbable. Well, it is merely a question of fact, and perhaps it is within the range of a crucial experiment.

But it may be at once admitted that such an experiment is difficult of execution. If the effect is a physical one it should vary according to some law of distance, or it should depend on the nature of the intervening medium; but, in order to test whether in any given case such variation occurs, it is necessary to have both agent and percipient in an unusually dependable condition, and they should if possible be unaware of the variation which is under test.

This last condition is desirable because of the sensitiveness of the sub-consciousness to suggestion: self-suggestion and other. If the percipient got an idea that distance or interposed screens were detrimental, most likely they would be detrimental; and although a suggestion might be artificially instilled that distance was advantageous, this would hardly leave the test quite fair, for the lessened physical stimulus might perhaps be over-utilised by the more keenly excited organism. Still that is an experiment to be tried among others; and it would be an instructive experience if the agent some day was, say, in India when the percipient thought he was in London, or *vice versâ*.

It is extremely desirable to probe this question of a physical or non-physical mode of communication in cases of telepathy; and if the fact can be established beyond doubt that sympathetic communication occurs between places as distant as India or America and England, or the terrestrial antipodes,—being unfelt between, or in the neighbourhood of the source,—then I should feel that this was so unlike what we are accustomed to in Physics that I should be strongly urged to

look to some other and more direct kind of mental relationship as the clue. Some of the recent experiments conducted by Miss Miles and Miss Ramsden (*Proc.*, vol. xxi. pp. 60-93), mentioned in Chapter IV. above, tend to support such a contention.

This then, is the first question on which crucial experiments are desirable though difficult.

(1) Is the mechanism of telepathy physical or not?

The second question of which I am thinking is one less easy to state and far less easy (as I think) to resolve. It may be stated thus, in two parts, or as two separate questions :—

(2) Is the power of operating on the minds of terrestrial persons confined to living terrestrial people?

(3) Is the power of operating on or interfering with the rest of the physical universe confined to living material bodies?

I should conjecture that an affirmative answer to Question 1 would render likely an affirmative answer to Questions 2 and 3; but that a negative answer to Question 1 would leave 2 and 3 entirely open; because, so far as we at present know, terrestrial people, and people with material bodies, may be the only people who exist.

It is this possibility, or, as many would hold, probability or almost certainty, that renders the strict scientific statement of Questions 2 and 3 so difficult. Yet they are questions which must be faced, and they ought to be susceptible, in time, of receiving definite answers.

That there are living terrestrial people we know; we also know that there is an immense variety of other terrestrial life;—though if we were not so familiar with the fact, the luxuriant prevalence and variety of life would be surprising. The existence of a bat, for instance, or a lobster, would be quite incredible. Whether there is life on other planets we do not know, and whether there is conscious existence between the planets we do not know; but I see no *a priori* reason for making scientific assertions on the subject one way or the other.

It is only at present a matter of probability. Just because we know that the earth is peopled with an immense variety of living beings, I myself should rather expect to find other regions many-peopled, and with a still more extraordinary variety. So also, since mental action is conspicuous on the earth, I should expect to find it existent elsewhere. If life is necessarily associated with a material carcase, then no doubt the surface of one of the many planetary masses must be the scene of its activity ; but if any kind of mental action is independent of material environment—being satisfied for instance with an etherial body, if a body is necessary,—then it may conceivably be that the psychical population is not limited to the surface of material aggregates or globes of matter, but may luxuriate either in the interstellar spaces or even perhaps in some undimensional form of existence of which we have no conception.

Were it not for the fact of telepathy the entire question would be an idle one,—a speculation based on nothing and apparently incapable of examination, still less of verification or disproof. But granted the fact of telepathy the question ceases to be an idle one, because it is just possible that these other intelligences, if they in any sense exist, may be able to communicate with us by the same sort of process as that by which we are now learning to be able to communicate with each other by non-physical means,—by means apparently independent of material sense organs. Whether it be true or not, it has been constantly and vehemently asserted as a fact that such communications, mainly from deceased relatives, but often also from strangers, are occasionally received by living persons.

The utterances of Phinuit, the handwriting of Miss A., Mr. Stainton Moses, and others, abound with communications purporting to come from minds not now associated with terrestrial matter.

Very well then ; is a crucial or test experiment possible, to settle whether this claim is well founded or not ?

Mere sentimental messages, conveying personal traits

of the deceased, though frequently convincing to surviving friends, cannot be allowed much scientific weight. Something more definite or generally intelligible must be sought.

Of such facts the handwriting of the deceased person, if reproduced accurately by an automatist who has never seen that handwriting, seems an exceptionally good test if it can be obtained. But the negative proof of ignorance on the part of the writer is difficult.

At first sight facts known to the deceased but not known to the automatist, if reported in a correct and detailed manner so as to surpass mere coincidence, would seem a satisfactory test. But here telepathy, which has stood us in good stead so far, begins to operate the other way; for if the facts are known to nobody on earth they cannot perhaps be verified; and if they are known to somebody still alive—however distant he may be—it is necessary to assume it *possible* that they were unconsciously “telepathed” from his mind.

But a certain class of facts may be verified without the assistance or knowledge of any living person,—as when a miser having died with the sole clue to a deposit of “valuables” an automatist’s hand, over the miser’s signature, subsequently describes the place; or when a sealed document, carefully deposited, is posthumously deciphered. The test in either of these cases is a better one. But still, living telepathy of a deferred kind is not excluded (though to my thinking it is rendered extremely improbable), for, as Mr. Podmore has often urged, the person writing the document or burying the treasure may have been *ipso facto* an unconscious agent on the minds of contemporaries.

#### CASE OF APPARENTLY POSTHUMOUS ACTIVITY

One of the most remarkable instances of this kind, and one which fortunately received the attention of the philosopher Kant, is one in which Swedenborg acted as the Medium, and is thus described by Kant in a letter

published as an Appendix to his cautious little book on clairvoyance which has been translated into English under the title, *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*.

Madame Herteville (Marteville), the widow of the Dutch Ambassador in Stockholm, some time after the death of her husband, was called upon by Croon, a goldsmith, to pay for a silver service which her husband had purchased from him. The widow was convinced that her late husband had been much too precise and orderly not to have paid this debt, yet she was unable to find this receipt. In her sorrow, and because the amount was considerable, she requested Mr. Swedenborg to call at her house. After apologising to him for troubling him, she said that if, as all people say, he possessed the extraordinary gift of conversing with the souls of the departed, he would perhaps have the kindness to ask her husband how it was about the silver service. Swedenborg did not at all object to comply with her request. Three days afterward the said lady had company at her house for coffee. Swedenborg called, and in his cool way informed her that he had conversed with her husband. The debt had been paid several months before his decease, and the receipt was in a bureau in the room upstairs. The lady replied that the bureau had been quite cleared out, and that the receipt was not found among all the papers. Swedenborg said that her husband had described to him, how after pulling out the left-hand drawer a board would appear, which required to be drawn out, when a secret compartment would be disclosed, containing his private Dutch correspondence, as well as the receipt. Upon hearing this description the whole company arose and accompanied the lady into the room upstairs. The bureau was opened; they did as they were directed; the compartment was found, of which no one had ever known before; and to the great astonishment of all, the papers were discovered there, in accordance with his description.

It is difficult to attribute this apparently posthumous activity to deferred telepathy from the living burgo-master—*i.e.*, deferred from the time when he was engaged in storing the papers—perhaps still more in this case because they were not stored with any view of subsequently disclosing their hiding place. Postponement of the apparently posthumous action for more than a century, so that all contemporaries are necessarily dead, strains this sort of telepathic explanation still more—in fact to breaking point; but such an event is hardly within the reach of purposed experiment. The



storage of objects or messages is ; and responsible people ought to write and deposit specific documents, for the purpose of posthumously communicating them to some one if they can ; taking all reasonable precautions against fraud and collusion, and also,—which is perhaps a considerable demand,—taking care that they do not forget the contents themselves.

If telepathy ever occurs from a supra-mundane and immaterial region, that is to say, from a discarnate mind not possessed of a brain, it may be difficult or impossible to distinguish it from clairvoyance. And, indeed, probably no discrimination would be necessary : that may be what " second-sight " or clairvoyance really is. But from the scientific point of view there is clearly all the difference in the world between recognised telepathy, such as has been proved to occur between one living person and another, and that other more hypothetical kind which has been suspected as occurring between discarnate intelligences, if there are any, and living people. If the process of ordinary experimental telepathy were ever ascertained to be a direct action of brain on brain, then acceptance of the other more hypothetical kind of telepathy would be almost forbidden—at any rate, would be rendered extremely difficult. If, however, the process of transmission should turn out to be a purely psychical one,—that is a psychological action directly between mind and mind, so that the brains at each end are only the instruments of record and verification,—then the possibility of a transfer of thought between minds unprovided with these appliances—or between one such mind and an embodied mind—is not at all inconceivable. It still has to be established, of course, and the difficulty of proof is still very great ; but the effort towards such a proof is a legitimate one. It is that effort which for some years now the Society has been patiently making, and specimens of some of the results so far attained will be dealt with in Section IV.

Meanwhile, I can refer students to a careful Report drawn up by Mrs. Sidgwick in *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. iii., on cases of apparitions of persons so long deceased that

the telepathic impression generated—if it is done by telepathy at all—must be attributed to the persistent activity of a discarnate mind. These are what have to be called Phantasms of the Dead.

## CHAPTER IX

### EXAMPLES OF APPARENT CLAIRVOYANCE

TO show that some apparent clairvoyance, whether it be due to hyperæsthesia or telepathy or something else, is really possible, I take an instructive little experiment recorded by Mrs. Verrall in *Proceedings*, vol. xi., page 192—which she tried in November 1890 with her daughter, who was then a child aged  $7\frac{1}{2}$  years. Other instances will be mentioned later on—see, for instance, p. 178.

#### RECOGNITION OF OBJECTS BY TELEPATHY OR HYPERÆSTHESIA PERCIPIENT, H., AGED $7\frac{1}{2}$ YEARS


Mrs. Verrall reports as follows :—

In November, 1890, I tried the following experiment with H. I drew a diagram, which I placed on H.'s forehead, while her eyes were shut, and asked her to describe it. To make the performance more like a game, I went on to ask what colour it was, and what she could see through it. We tried four experiments, three on the afternoon of November 16th, and one at 6.15 on November 30th, with the following results :—

*Object drawn.*—A triangle.

*Result.*—H. drew a triangle with her finger in the air. *Right.*

*Object drawn.*—A triangle with apex cut off.

*Result.*—H. described and drew an irregular figure, which did not seem to satisfy her, then said it was like an oval dish  *Wrong.*

*Object drawn.*—A square.

*Result.*—H. said : "It's like a window with no cross bars," and drew a four-sided rectangular figure in the air. *Right.*

*Object drawn.*—A square divided into 4 squares by a vertical and a horizontal line.

*Result.*—H. said : " It's a diamond." " What else ? " said I, meaning what colour, etc. " It's got a line across it, and another across that. [*Right.*] The colour is pale blue."

When I gave her the diagram, she turned it anglewise and said, " Oh yes, that's right, and the colour was not far wrong." As the diagram was drawn in ink on white paper, I did not understand, and asked what she meant. She said, " Why, it's all blue, bluish white inside, and even the ink is blue." The diagram had been dried with blotting paper and was not a very deep black, but I could see nothing blue. Ten minutes afterwards she picked up the paper again and commented on the fact that it was blue, the lines dark bright blue, and the inside pale blue. I burnt the diagram and discontinued the game after observing this persistence of a self-suggested hallucination.

We had previously tried experiments which seemed to show that the child could *feel* the diagram. She could almost always tell whether the right or wrong side of a playing card were placed on her forehead. I was quite unable to distinguish the two sides. I am more inclined to attribute her successes (3 out of 4) to hyperæsthesia than to telepathy.

I will now quote a case which is rather a striking example of the fact that the intelligence operative through unconscious or subliminal processes is superior to that of the normal intelligence of the persons concerned ; so that just as people occasionally seem able to become cognisant of facts or events by means ordinarily closed to them,—a phenomenon which appears akin to the water-dowsing faculty and to the " homing " instincts of animals,—so sometimes they can write poetry or solve problems beyond their normal capacity.

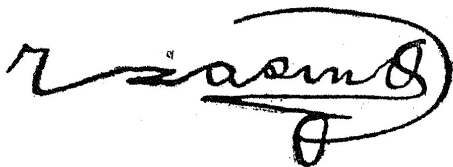
Here, for instance, is the case of the solution of a mathematical problem by automatic writing—with the pencil not held in the hand but attached to the heart-shaped piece of board called a " planchette." It is quoted from the record which I communicated at the time to the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research, vol. xi.

#### A. CASE OF AUTOMATIC INTELLIGENCE

One feature of interest is that both the witnesses are exceptionally competent. The account was written by

an old pupil of my own at Bedford College in the seventies—one of the ablest students there,—Miss C. M. Pole, daughter of the late Dr. Pole, F.R.S., the well-known Engineer, Musician, and writer on card-games. Miss Pole is now Mrs. Garrett Smith, living at Magdeburg, and writes as follows :—

In the early part of 1885 I was staying at—— in the house of Mrs. Q., and I and her daughter, Miss Q., B.A., Lond., used to amuse ourselves in writing with a Planchette. We had several Planchettes (I think four), but we could only get response from one of them, which belonged to Miss Q. In the house with us were some eight or nine others, . . . but for no other pair would the Planchette act. The same one had formerly given good results with Miss Q. and another friend, but I have never written with a Planchette before or since. We got all sorts of nonsense out of it, sometimes long doggerel rhymes with several verses. Sometimes we asked for prophecies, but I do not remember ever getting one which came true, and my impression is that generally when we asked for a prophecy the thing went off in a straight line—running off the table if we did not take our hands off. It often did this, refusing to write at all, and towards the end of my stay there I believe it was always so ; we could get no answer from it. I believe we often asked Planchette who the guiding spirit was ; but I only once remember getting a definite connected answer. Then it wrote that his name was “ Jim,” and that he had been a Senior Wrangler. After other questions we asked it to write the equation to its own curve [in other words, to express mathematically the outline of the heart-shaped board]. Planchette wrote something like this quite distinctly—

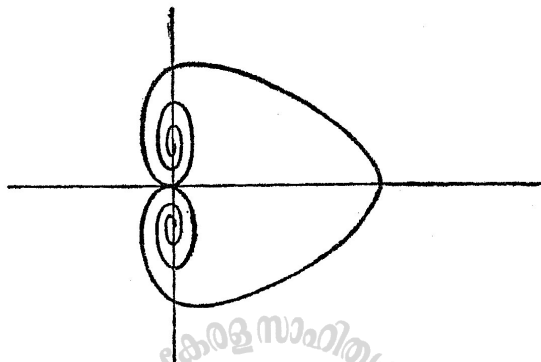


(The curl backwards always denoted that the answer was finished.)

We repeated the question several times, but each time the answer was the same, sometimes more, sometimes less distinct. We

interpreted it as  $r = \frac{a \sin \theta}{\theta}$ . . . . I knew just enough to be able to draw the curve represented by the equation. In my

first try I made a mistake and believed the curve to be quite a different one, but afterwards I drew [something like] the following [rough sketch]—a double never-ending spiral (but see p. 103) :—



We checked our result by taking the equation to the Mathematical Master at the Boys' College, who drew the same [sort of] curve for us, but we did not tell him where we got the equation from.

I cannot say whether the Planchette we used was really exactly the shape of the outside curve; I should rather fancy that with the heart shape the resemblance ended. I am *quite sure* that I had never seen the curve before, and therefore the production of the equation could not have been an act of unconscious memory on my part. Also I most certainly did not know enough mathematics to know how to form an equation which would represent such a curve, or to know even of what type the equation must be. But I had come across such equations and drawn the curves represented by them;—for instance, afterwards I found in my notebook the spiral  $r\theta = \frac{1}{2}\pi a$ , and the cardioid  $r = a(1 + \cos \theta)$ . We had used no text-book, and in the full notes of the lectures I had attended, these were the two curves I found most similar to Planchette's. If my brain produced the equation written by Planchette, it must have been that I unconsciously formed an equation like some I had seen before, which by a curious coincidence chanced to represent a heart-shaped curve.

I know that we were both quite unconscious of any influence we may have exercised on the Planchette.

CECILIA GARRETT SMITH

Magdeburg, November 1903

I (O. L.) made inquiries about Miss Q., and found that she was well known to friends of mine, and was a serious and responsible and trustworthy person, so I wrote some further questions to her, and received the following reply :—

*March 23rd, 1904*

. . . As far as Miss Pole and I were concerned, it was quite *bonâ fide*, and was not open to any suspicion of practical joking or setting traps for each other. It is true that when we wrote *planchette*, it was never with any serious motive, such as with the object of testing the unconscious mind, or for any scientific purpose, but merely for the fun of the thing. We used to ask it to prophesy future events, and to make up poetry, and all purely for amusement, after the manner of schoolgirls. Nevertheless, all that was written was quite in good faith.

The equation written did not come within the mathematical knowledge I then possessed, which was limited to the mathematics necessary for the London B.A. Pass Degree. I knew of course that every curve could be represented by an equation, and I was familiar with polar co-ordinates in which the equation was written. But the only equations I could then identify were those of the conic sections. Miss Pole had read some elementary Differential, and knew more than I did, but my impression is that her knowledge was not sufficient to enable her to trace curves.

Certainly neither of us perceived from the appearance of the equation that the reply was the correct one, but that I think would have been too much to expect, even if our knowledge had been much higher than it was.

I did not know sufficient at that time to attempt to plot the curve. I believe Miss Pole did attempt it, but if so, her attempts were unsuccessful. We were not satisfied that the equation did represent a curve like the outline of the *planchette* till we had asked our mathematical master to trace it for us. (This was done without telling him any of the facts of the case.)

I do not remember that we ever closely compared the curve he drew in tracing the equation with the actual *planchette* in question. We did not take the matter very seriously, and were quite content when we saw that the solution was at all events approximately true.

On *now* tracing the curve represented by the equation, I am inclined to think that it very closely resembles the shape of the actual *planchette* used, from my memory of it. (The *planchette* is no longer in existence.) . . .

To this I (O. L.) add that the equation which would naturally occur to any one is the cardioid  $r = a(1 + \cos \theta)$  ;

and if this equation had been written by planchette there would have been nothing specially remarkable ; for although not then in Mrs. Garrett Smith's mind, she had undoubtedly known it as a student.

The equation written by Planchette is not a familiar one and certainly would not be likely to occur to her, nor would it have occurred to me. The sketch given does not profess to be an exact representation of the curve corresponding to the equation written by the planchette, but only represents her recollection of its general character.

Mr. J. W. Sharpe, of Bournemouth, has been good enough to draw out an accurate graph of the curve, and here is his drawing on a reduced scale.



It is to be remembered that the equation  $r = a \frac{\sin \theta}{\theta}$  was given by Planchette, as representing mathematically the shape of its own outline or boundary ; the intelligence controlling its movements being represented as that of a Senior Wrangler.

With regard to his drawing, Mr. Sharpe observes that the curve does not consist of two sets of spirals, as at first depicted roughly, but of two sets of loops, all passing through the cusp and touching one another

there, and all contained within the outer heart-shaped boundary. The loops meet only at the cusp, and there is an infinite number of them. They decrease in area without limit, ultimately sinking into the point of the cusp.

The equation very well represents the ordinary form of a planchette. But if it had accidentally been reversed

into  $r = a \frac{\theta}{\sin \theta}$  the curve would have been entirely different and entirely unlike any planchette outline.

Mr. Sharpe thinks it very unlikely that either of the automatists had ever seen an accurate graph of the equation given in their writing. It is of course much more difficult to invent an equation to fit a given curve (which was the feat performed by the writing in this case) than, when the equation is given, to draw the curve represented by it.

#### POWER OF UNSEEN READING

In illustration of supernormal power of a still more excessive kind I quote from the automatic writings of Mr. Stainton Moses—well known as a master for many years in University College School, London—who for a great part of this period used to write automatically in the early morning in solitude. A great number of these writings have been published and are well known to all students of the subject; but the following incident is of a surprising character and is an example, though an exceptionally strong one, of the power of reading letters, etc., possessed in some degree by one or two of the "controls" of Mrs. Piper and of many another medium in history.

The following script was obtained by Mr. Stainton Moses while he was sitting in Dr. Speer's library and discoursing with various supposed communicators through his writing hand:—

See *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xi., p. 106.

S. M. Can you read?

"No, friend, I cannot, but Zachary Gray can, and Rector. I am not able to materialise myself, or to command the elements."



- S. M. Are either of those spirits here ?  
 " I will bring one by and by. I will send . . . Rector is here ? "
- S. M. I am told you can read. Is that so ? Can you read a book ?  
 (Handwriting changed.) " Yes, friend, with difficulty."
- S. M. Will you write for me the last line of the first book of the *Æneid* ?  
 " Wait—*Omnibus errantem terris et fluctibus æstas.*"  
 [This was right.]
- S. M. Quite so. But I might have known it. Can you go to the bookcase, take the last book but one on the second shelf, and read me the last paragraph of the ninety-fourth page ? I have not seen it, and do not even know its name.  
 [With a little delay the following writing came.]  
 " I will curtly prove by a short historical narrative, that Popery is a novelty, and has gradually arisen or grown up since the primitive and pure time of Christianity, not only since the apostolic age, but even since the lamentable union of kirk and state by Constantine."  
 (The book on examination proved to be a queer one called "*Roger's Antipopopriestian*, an attempt to liberate and purify Christianity from Popery, Politikirkality, and Priestrulie." The extract given above was accurate, but the word "narrative" substituted for "account.")
- S. M. How came I to pitch upon so appropriate a sentence ?  
 " I know not, my friend. It was done by coincidence. The word was changed in error. I knew it when it was done, but would not change."
- S. M. How do you read ? You wrote more slowly, and by fits and starts.  
 " I wrote what I remembered and then went for more. It is a special effort to read, and useful only as a test. Your friend was right last night ; we can read, but only when conditions are very good. We will read once again, and write, and then impress you of the book :—  
 ' Pope is the last great writer of that school of poetry, the poetry of the intellect, or of the intellect mingled with the fancy.' That is truly written. Go and take the eleventh book on the same shelf. [I took a book called *Poetry, Romance, and Rhetoric.*] It will open at the page for you. Take it and read, and recognise our power, and the permission which the great and good God gives us, to show you of our power over matter. To Him be glory. Amen."
- (The book opened at page 145, and there was the quotation perfectly true. I had not seen the book before : certainly had no idea of its contents. S. M.) [These books were in Dr. Speer's library :—F. W. H. M.]

To this Mr. Myers pertinently appends the note :—

It is plain that a power such as this, of acquiring and reproducing fresh knowledge, interposes much difficulty in the way of identifying any alleged spirit by means of his knowledge of the facts of his earth life.

### DREAM LUCIDITY

To illustrate the fact that extra or supernormal lucidity is possible in dreams, a multitude of instances might be quoted from the publications of the Society for Psychical Research. Almost at random I quote two,—the first a short one of which the contemporary record is reported on by a critical and sceptical member of the Society, Mr. Thos. Barkworth, in the *Journal* of the Society for December 1895.

G. 249. Dream.

The following is a case which was noted at the time, before it was known to be veridical.

It was received by Mr. Barkworth, who writes concerning it :—

“ WEST HATCH, CHIGWELL, ESSEX, *August 24th*, [1895]

“ It has been often made a subject of reproach by persons who distrust the S.P.R. that the evidence we obtain is seldom, if ever, supported by written records demonstrably made before the dream or the hallucination had been verified by subsequently ascertained facts. Indeed, a Mr. Taylor Innes, writing in the *Nineteenth Century* some years ago, went so far, if I remember rightly, as to assert that no such case could be produced up to the time he wrote. It must certainly be admitted that in provokingly numerous instances it is found that the alleged letter or diary has been destroyed.

“ The following experience of the Rev. E. K. Elliott, Rector of Worthing, who was formerly in the navy, and who made the entry in his diary as quoted when he was cruising in the Atlantic out of reach of post or telegraph, will therefore be found of interest. The diary is still in his possession.

T. B.

*Extract from diary written out in Atlantic, January 14th, 1847*

“ Dreamt last night I received a letter from my uncle, H. E., dated January 3rd, in which news of my dear brother's death was given. It greatly struck me.

“ My brother had been ill in Switzerland, but the last news I received on leaving England was that he was better.

"The 'January 3rd' was very black, as if intended to catch my eye.

On my return to England I found, as I quite expected, a letter awaiting me saying my brother had died on the above date.

Worthing

"E. K. ELLIOTT"

The second case I quote is a much longer and more elaborate one, and we owe its receipt to Dr. Hodgson while in America.

There are many partially similar records of people becoming aware of an accident in which some near relative was injured or killed : and it is noteworthy that the emotion caused by injury seems as likely to convey such an impression as anything pertaining to death itself ; but the point of the following narrative is that a complete stranger became impressed with facts which were happening at a distance, without the slightest personal interest in any one concerned—so that it seems to make in favour of a general clairvoyant faculty rather than for any spiritistic explanation. The prefix P. 224 is merely a classificatory reference number.

P. 224. Dream.

The following case has some resemblance to Mrs. Storie's experience, of which an account was published in *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. i. p. 370, except that the person whose fate was represented in the dream was in the case here printed entirely unknown to the dreamer. The account is written by Mr. H. W. Wack, Attorney, and comes to us through the American Branch of the Society.

"COURT HOUSE, ST. PAUL, MINN., February 10th, 1892

"I believe I have had a remarkable experience. About midnight on the 29th day of December, headsores and fatigued, I left my study where I had been poring over uninspiring law text, and climbing to my chamber door, fell into bed for the night.

"Nothing unusual had transpired in my affairs that day, and yet, when I gave myself to rest, my brain buzzed on with a myriad fancies. I lay an hour, awake, and blinking like an over-fed owl. The weird intonation of an old kitchen clock fell upon my ears but faintly, as it donged the hour of two. The sound of the clock chime had hardly died when I became conscious [of] my position in a passenger coach on the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha railroad. I was journeying to Duluth, Minnesota, from St. Paul, in which latter place I had gone to sleep. I was aware that I had been on the train about four hours and that I was somewhere near the town of Shell Lake,

Wis., distant from St. Paul about eighty miles. I had often been over the road, and as I peered through the coach window, I recognised, in the moonlit scene, features of country and habitation I had seen before. We were plunging on, almost heedlessly as it seemed, when I fancied I heard and was startled from my reverie by a piercing shriek, which was protracted into a piteous moaning and gasping, as if some human creature were suffering some hideous torture.

"Then I felt the train grind heavily to an awkward stop. There was a sudden commotion fore and aft. Train men with lanterns hurried through my car and joined employes near the engine. I could see the lights flash here and there, beside and beneath the cars; brakemen moved along the wheels in groups, the pipe voice of the conductor and the awe-stricken cry of the black porter infused a livening sense to a scene which I did not readily understand. Instinctively I concluded that an accident had happened, or perhaps that a break to the train had occasioned this sudden uprising of train men. A minute later I was out upon the road bed. The brusque and busy search and the disturbed manner of the attendants did not propitiate elaborate inquiry from a curious passenger, so I was appeased to be told, in very ugly snappish English, that if I had eyes I might see for myself that 'some one got killed, I reckon.' Everybody moved and acted in a spirit of stealth, and each, it appeared, expected a horrible 'find.' The trucks were being examined from the rear of the train forward. Blood splashes were discovered on nearly all the bearings under the entire train. When the gang reached one of the forward cars, all lights were cast upon a truck which was literally scrambled with what appeared to be brains—human brains, evidently, for among the clots were small tufts of human hair. This truck, particularly, must have ground over the bulk of a human body. Every fixture between the wheels was smeared with the crimson ooze of some crushed victim. But where was the body, or at least its members? The trucks were covered only with a pulp of mangled remnants. The search for what appeared of the killed was extended 500 yards back of the train and all about the right-of-way with no more satisfactory result than to occasionally find a blood-stained tie.

"All hands boarded the train; many declaring that it was an unusual mishap on a railroad which left such uncertain trace of its victim. Again I felt the train thundering on through the burnt pine wastes of northern Minnesota. As I reclined there in my berth, I reflected upon the experience of the night, and often befuddled my sleepy head in an effort to understand how a train, pushing along at the rate of thirty miles an hour, could so grind and triturate a vital bulk, staining only trucks behind the engine, unless the killed at the fatal time were upon the truck or huddled closely by it. I concluded, therefore, that the body being destroyed under the train had been concealed near the bespattered fixtures of the car. I had read of death to

tramps stealing rides by hiding themselves under or between cars, and finally I dismissed meditation—assured that another unfortunate itinerant had been crushed out of existence. Horrible! I shuddered and awoke—relieved to comprehend it all a *dream*.

"Now the fact that the foregoing is an accurate statement of a dream experienced by me is not a matter for marvel. Taken alone, there is nothing remarkable in the time at which this vision blackened my sleep. The spell was upon me between two and three o'clock in the morning—of that I am certain. I am positive of the time, because, when I awoke, I heard the clock distinctly, as it struck three.

"On the morrow, I,—who usually forget an ordinary dream long before breakfast—recounted to the family the details of the night's distraction. From my hearers there followed only the ordinary comments of how ghastly and how shocking the story was as told and how strange the nature of the accident—that *no parts of the body had been found*. The latter circumstance was, to me also, quite an unusual feature of railroad casualty.

"The evening following the night of the dream (December 30th), at 5 o'clock, I returned to my home, stepped into my study, and, as I am in the habit of doing, I glanced at a page of the *St. Paul Dispatch*, a daily evening newspaper. It had been casually folded by a previous reader, so that in picking it up flatly, the article which first fixed my attention read:

"Fate of a tramp. Horrible death experienced by an unknown man on the Omaha Road. His remains scattered for miles along the track by the merciless wheels.

"Duluth, December 30.—Every truck on the incoming Omaha train from St. Paul this morning was splashed with blood. Train men did not know there had been an accident till they arrived here, but think some unfortunate man must have been stealing a ride between St. Paul and this city. Train men on a later train state that a man's leg was found by them at Spooner, and that for two miles this side the tracks were scattered with pieces of flesh and bone. There is no possible means of identification.'

"Here was an evident verification of all that transpired in my mind between two and three o'clock on the previous night. I reflected, and the more I pondered the faster I became convinced that I had been in some mysterious form, spirit or element, witness of the tragedy reported in the columns of the press—that my vision was perfect as to general details, and the impression complete and exact to time, place, and circumstance. The next morning I scanned the pages of the *Pioneer Press* of December 31st, and read the following paragraph:—

"Unknown man killed, Shell Lake, Wis. Special telegram, December 30th.—Fragments of the body of an unknown man were picked up on the railroad track to-day. Portions of the same body were also found on over 100 miles of the railroad. He

is supposed to have been killed by the night train, but just where is not known.'

"With this came the conviction to me that, living and asleep, 100 miles from the place of the killing, I had been subjected to the phantom-sight of an actual occurrence on the Omaha railroad, as vivid and in truth as I have stated it above.

"I have not written this account because Mark Twain and other authors have published in current magazines their experiences in what is termed Mental Telepathy or Mental Telegraphy. On the contrary, having read a number of those articles, I have hesitated to utter, as authentic, what I now believe to be a material and striking evidence of the extent, the caprice, and the possibilities of this occult phenomenon.

"HARRY W. WACK."

In reply to Dr. Hodgson's inquiries, Mr. Wack wrote :—

"ST. PAUL, *February 20th, 1892*

"MY DEAR SIR,—Replying to your valued favour of the 15th inst., I will say that you *are right* in understanding that my account of the dream submitted to your Society is a true narrative.

"I reaffirm every word of it, and give you my solemn assurance that, as I have stated, I informed the family and friends of the dream and its details, before I had the first suspicion that the public press ever had contained or ever would contain a report of such an actual occurrence.

"If desirable I will make affidavit as to the truth of the substance of the narrative in your hands.

"I enclose a few corroborative letters, the signatures to which I procured yesterday, February 19th. If these serve you, well and good.

"HARRY W. WACK."

The following were the corroborative letters enclosed :—

(1)

"ST. PAUL, *February 20th, 1892*

"GENTLEMEN,—Referring to an account of a dream submitted to you by Mr. Harry Wack of this city which I have read, I beg leave to add the following facts corroborative of the narrative.

"After careful consideration of the article, I find that the story of the dream on December 29th-30th is in substance identical with that which was related by Mr. Wack at breakfast on the morning of December 30th, 1891. On that occasion Mr. Wack stated that he had been agitated the previous night by a dream of unusual features, and then, at the request of those

present, he recited what now appears in his article, which I have just perused for the first time. On the evening of December 30th, 1891, when Mr. Wack discovered the newspaper item, he again mentioned the dream and called my attention to the newspaper item, and several of the family discussed the matter. On the morning of December 31st, another newspaper clipping bearing on the same matter was debated by the family.

"Aside from the unusual features and hideousness of the dream, there was nothing to startle us, until the newspaper accounts developed the affair in a mysterious sense. The first version of the dream was given in the morning of December 30th. The first newspaper dispatch appeared and was discovered in the evening of the same day. This I know of my own knowledge, being present on each occasion.

"MRS. MARGARET B. MACDONALD "

(2) "ST. PAUL, MINN., *February 20th, 1892*

"GENTLEMEN,—I have read the letter of Mrs. Macdonald, with whom I visited on December 29th, 30th, 31st, and days following, and with your permission I will say that I also was present at breakfast when Mr. Wack mentioned the dream, and at dinner (6 p.m.) when Mr. Wack called our attention to the newspaper item, which he then declared was a positive verification of the dream he experienced the night before. I have read the account of the dream, and I believe it to be precisely as I understood it from Mr. Wack's account given on the morning of December 30th, 1891.

"ROSE B. HAMILTON "

(3) "ST. PAUL, *February 20th, 1892*

"GENTLEMEN,—Having read the foregoing letters of Mrs. Macdonald and Miss Rose B. Hamilton, and being familiar with the facts and incidents therein set forth, I would add my endorsement to them as being in strict accord with the truth.

"Mr. Wack stated his dream as he has written of it in the article which I understand he has submitted to you, on the morning of December 30th, 1891. He came upon and drew our attention to the newspaper articles in the evening of December 30th, and on the morning of December 31st, 1891. It was these newspaper dispatches which made the dream interesting, and thereafter it was freely discussed.

"C. E. McDONALD "

Mr. H. W. Smith, an Associate Member of the American Branch, writes to Dr. Hodgson in connection with the case:—

" OFFICE OF SMITH & AUSTRIAN, COMMISSION MERCHANTS,  
 " 290, E., 6TH STREET, PRODUCE EXCHANGE,  
 " ST. PAUL, MINN., April 14th, 1892

" MY DEAR SIR,—It has been impossible for me to accept Mr. Wack's invitation to meet at his house the witnesses he cited in his communication to you. I have already written you of my preliminary interview with Mr. Wack, and it confirms in my own mind the high opinion which I previously held of him through our acquaintanceship, extending over a series of years. There is no reasonable doubt in my mind that the statement he makes is substantially correct, at least as respects any and all allegations of fact. Of course the application of these facts to an unknown force is a matter upon which I cannot speak.

" HERBERT W. SMITH "

Instances like this are by no means solitary, and whatever view we take of them we have to include them in the roll of facts demanding explanation—an explanation which may not be readily forthcoming. It may be presumed that as far as they go they make against the spiritistic hypothesis in any simple or direct form; and that is why in a book like this it is necessary to emphasise them.

Meanwhile, all we are sure of is that information is obtained by some mediums which is entirely beyond their conscious knowledge, and occasionally beyond the conscious knowledge of everyone present. But as to how this lucidity is attained we are as yet in the dark; though we must ultimately proceed to consider the possibility that it is by some sort of actual communication from other intelligences, akin to the conveyance of information in the accustomed and ordinary human way, by rumour, by conversation, and by the press.

Incidents that seem to point to some form of super-normal communication are exemplified in the experiments of Dr. van Eeden of Bussum, in Holland, with Mrs. Thompson at Hampstead,—a lady who is referred to more particularly in Section IV. of this book. (See his paper on sittings with Mrs. Thompson in *Proceedings, S.P.R.*, vol. xvii., especially pp. 86-7 and 112-115). Dr. van Eeden, having cultivated the power of controlling



his own dreams, so as to be able to dream of performing actions which he had planned while awake, arranged with Mrs. Thompson that he would occasionally call "Nelly" (her "control") in his dreams after returning to Holland, and that if she heard him calling she should tell Mr. Piddington, who was in charge of the sittings, at his next sitting. On three occasions, in January and February 1900, some success was obtained in these experiments; that is, "Nelly" stated that she had heard Dr. van Eeden calling, and had "been to see him"; the dates she gave were approximately, though not exactly, the same as those recorded in his diary of dreams; but on each occasion she gave details, which were afterwards verified, as to his circumstances at the time. On a fourth occasion (April 19th, 1900), when "Nelly" stated that she had been to see Dr. van Eeden, he had no dream of her at the time, but she gave a description of his condition which corresponded with what it had been during the early part of the same month.

A case of a somewhat similar kind is the one recorded in Dr. Hodgson's report on Mrs. Piper (*Proceedings*, vol. viii., p. 120), where Mr. M. N. in America relates that Mrs. Piper's control, "Dr. Phinuit," had said that he would visit Mr. N.'s dying father in England about certain matters connected with his will, and where later on it was reported by those attending the dying father that he had complained of the presence of an obtrusive old man. (This case is quoted below, see page 116.)

### CLAIRVOYANCE OF THE DYING

The extra lucidity of the dying is a thing so often asserted that it has become almost a commonplace; and sometimes, as in the case of children, it would seem to eclipse mere imagination—as for instance, when a dying child welcomes, and appears to be welcomed by, its deceased mother. But these visions and auditions, which are unmistakably common, are usually of things

beyond our ordinary cognisance, so that for the most part they have to be relegated to the category of the unverifiable. Occasionally, however, we have records of a kind of clairvoyant faculty whereby terrestrial occurrences also are perceived by persons who in health had no such power; and these are worthy of attention,—especially those which are reciprocal, producing an impression at both ends of a terrestrial line, as if the telepathic and less material mode of communication had in their case already begun.

The extant descriptions of dying utterances are very much like the utterances in the waking stages of Mrs. Piper's trance, to be subsequently mentioned—and these do not appear to be random or meaningless sayings, but do really correspond to some kind of reality, since in them the appearance of strangers is frequently described correctly and messages are transmitted which have a definite meaning. Moreover, the look of ecstasy on Mrs. Piper's face at a certain stage of the waking process is manifestly similar to that seen on the faces of some dying people; and both describe the subjective visions as of something more beautiful and attractive than those of earth.

Whether the dying really have greater telepathic power as agents, which is what is assumed in the ordinary telepathic explanation of Phantasms of the Living, is doubtful, but that they sometimes have greater sensibility as percipients seems likely; and sometimes the event which they are describing is likewise apprehended by another person at a distance,—thus appearing to demonstrate reciprocal telepathic influence. There is a small group of cases illustrative of the reciprocal clairvoyance of the dying,—I can only quote an illustrative case or two from the few which are well evidenced, *i.e.*, which come up to the standard of the Society for Psychical Research in this matter—but I omit the authentication in quoting them, and I also abbreviate, as I only here wish to indicate the kind of thing.

The writer of the following account is Colonel B.,

a well-known Irish gentleman. He explains that his wife engaged to sing with her daughters a Miss X., who was training as a public singer but who ultimately did not come out in that capacity, having married a Mr. Z.

Six or seven years afterwards Mrs. B., who was dying, in the presence of her husband spoke of voices she heard, singing, saying that she had heard them several times that day, and that there was one voice among them which she knew, but could not remember whose voice it was.

"Suddenly she stopped and said, pointing over my head," says Colonel B., "'Why, there she is in the corner of the room; it is Julia X.; she is coming on; she is leaning over you; she has her hands up; she is praying; do look; she is going.' I turned but could see nothing. Mrs. B. then said, 'She is gone.' All these things [the hearing of singing and the vision of the singer] I imagined to be the phantasies of a dying person.

"Two days afterwards, taking up the *Times* newspaper, I saw recorded the death of Julia Z., wife of Mr. Z. I was so astounded that in a day or so after the funeral I went up to — and asked Mr. X. if Mrs. Z., his daughter, was dead. He said, 'Yes, poor thing, she died of puerperal fever. On the day she died she began singing in the morning, and sang and sang until she died.'"

The case next quoted is a curious incident connected with a deceased child, obtained in one of the bereaved mother's sittings with Mrs. Piper in America, at a time when Phinuit was in control.

It is the concluding portion of a long and striking series of communications, extremely characteristic of identity, which are quoted both in *Human Personality*, vol. ii. 245-7, and in *Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xiii. pp. 386-9. The mother's testimony is thus reported :—

The remarks made at her second sitting suggest that "the little book" in the child's mind was not this one. "Kakie wants the little bit of a book mamma read by her bedside, with the pretty bright things hanging from it—mamma put it in her hands—the last thing she remembers." Mrs. Sutton states that this was a little prayer book with a cross and other symbols in silver attached to ribbons for marking the places, and that it was sent to her by a friend after Kakie had ceased to know any one except perhaps for a passing moment. Mrs. Sutton read it

when Kakie seemed unconscious, and *after Kakie's death* placed it in her hands to prevent the blood settling in the nails. She adds later that Mrs. Piper's hands, when the book was asked for at the sitting, were put into the same position as Kakie's.

There is also evidence of reciprocity of an unusual kind in connection with the Piper case; for "Phinuit" has been described as perceived by a dying person at a distance, in correspondence with the assertion of Phinuit that he would go and talk to this same person about unfair clauses in his will.

The account of this curious episode is from an American gentleman who had had a good deal of experience in Piper sittings, and who does not want his name disclosed. Of three examples of what he calls predictions, thus obtained, I select this one, as it illustrates the kind of reciprocal experience of which I am now speaking. The account is corroborated by Mrs. "M. N."

April 5th, 1889

... About the end of March of last year I made [Mrs. Piper] a visit (having been in the habit of doing so, since early in February, about once a fortnight). [As Phinuit] told me that the death of a near relative of mine would occur in about six weeks, from which I should realise some pecuniary advantages, I naturally thought of my father, who was advanced in years, and whose description Mrs. Piper had given me very accurately some week or two previously. She had not spoken of him as my father, but merely as a person nearly connected with me. I asked her at that sitting whether this person was the one who would die, but she declined to state anything more clearly to me. My wife, to whom I was then engaged, went to see Mrs. Piper a few days afterwards, and she told her (my wife) that my father would die in a few weeks.

About the middle of May my father died very suddenly in London from heart failure, when he was recovering from a very slight attack of bronchitis, and the very day that his doctor had pronounced him out of danger. Previous to this Mrs. Piper (as Dr. Phinuit) had told me that she would endeavour to influence my father about certain matters connected with his will before he died. Two days after I received the cable announcing his death, my wife and I went to see Mrs. Piper, and she (Phinuit) spoke of his presence, and his sudden arrival in the spirit-world and said that he (Dr. Phinuit) had endeavoured to persuade

him in those matters while my father was sick. Dr. Phinuit told me the state of the will, and described the principal executor, and said that he (the executor) would make a certain disposition in my favour, subject to the consent of the two other executors, when I got to London, England. Three weeks afterwards I arrived in London; found the principal executor to be the man Phinuit had described. The will went materially as he had stated. The disposition was made in my favour; and my sister, who was chiefly at my father's bedside the last three days of his life, told me that he had repeatedly complained of the presence of an old man at the foot of his bed, who annoyed him by discussing his private affairs. . . .

(" M. N.")

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A similar illustration of reciprocity occurred in the case of the lady called "Elisa Mannors," whose near relatives and friends concerned in the communications were known also to Mr. Myers.

On the morning after the death of her uncle, called F. in the report, she described an incident in connection with the appearance of herself to her uncle on his death-bed. Dr. Hodgson's account of this is in *Proceedings S.P.R.*, vol. xiii. p. 378, as follows:—

The notice of his [F.'s] death was in a Boston morning paper, and I happened to see it on my way to the sitting. The first writing of the sitting came from Madame Elisa, without my expecting it. She wrote clearly and strongly, explaining that F. was there with her, but unable to speak directly, and that she wished to give an account of how she had helped F. to reach her. She said that she had been present at his death-bed, and had spoken to him, and she repeated what she had said, an unusual form of expression, and indicated that he had heard and recognised her. This was confirmed in detail in the only way possible at the time, by a very intimate friend of Madame Elisa and myself, and also of the nearest surviving relative of F. I showed my friend the account of the sitting; and to this friend, a day or two later, the relative, who was present at the death-bed, stated spontaneously that F. when dying saw Madame Elisa who was speaking to him, and he repeated what she was saying. The expression so repeated, which the relative quoted to my friend, was that which I had received from Madame Elisa through Mrs. Piper's trance, when the death-bed incident was, of course, entirely unknown to me.

## WRITING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Instances in which foreign languages unknown to the medium are written or spoken are comparatively rare.

At a sitting in 1892, when Madame Elisa Mannors was "communicating," some Italian was written by request, the lady being as familiar with Italian as with English, but only two or three common words were decipherable. The first names of sitter and communicator were given, and the last name was both written and afterwards given by G.P. to Phinuit. Some of the writing was of a personal character, and some about the watch [concerning which inquiry had been made]; and G.P. stated correctly, *inter alia*, that the sitter's mother was present (in "spirit") with the communicator, and that he himself did not know her. The real names are very uncommon. The Italian for "It is well, Patience," was whispered at the end of the sitting as though by direct control of the voice of Madame Elisa.

Further attempts were made to speak and write Italian, but not much was said, and the writing was not very legible. Concerning this Dr. Hodgson remarks :—

"As I have mentioned elsewhere (Report, pp. 293, 332), the intelligence communicating by writing is not conscious of the act of writing. The chief difficulty apparently in getting another language written by the hand is that strange words tend to be written phonetically unless they are thought out slowly letter by letter. The writing is usually much more legible now than it was during the period of the records from which I am quoting, when there was frequently much difficulty in deciphering even the simplest English words. It was therefore not surprising that so little of the Italian written by Madame Elisa was decipherable."

This does not appear to be a strong case, but the next one seems to me better :

Dr. Hodgson reports the following case in a sitting which a Mr. Vernon Briggs had with Mrs. Piper in

October 1893 (*Proc. S.P.R.*, xiii. 337; or *Hum. Pers.* ii. 244).

The communication purported to come from a Honolulu boy named Kalua, who became much attached to Mr. Briggs during a six months' stay of Mr. Briggs in Honolulu in 1881, and who followed Mr. Briggs back to Boston under somewhat romantic circumstances in 1883. He was soon sent back to his native island, but again returned to Boston, where he was shot in 1886, in a sailors' Bethel, whether intentionally or not was unknown. There was some suspicion against a Swede who was imprisoned, but there was no evidence against him, and he was finally discharged. The Swede said that Kalua had accidentally shot himself with a revolver, and eventually confessed that after the accident he had himself hidden the revolver behind a flue, where, after taking part of the chimney down, it was found. Mr. Briggs had taken a handkerchief belonging to Kalua with him to the sitting. Kalua had been shot through the heart, and there was some confusion apparently about the locality of the suffering, "stomach" and "side" being mentioned, under what appeared to be the direct control of the voice by "Kalua," and Mr. Briggs asked if it was Kalua. Phinuit then spoke for "Kalua," who said that he did not kill himself; that he had been gambling with the other man who disputed with him and shot him, but did not mean to, and who threw the revolver "into the hot box where the pepples are" (meaning the "furnace" and the "coals"), and hid his purse under the steps where he was killed. "Kalua" also said there was shrubbery near it. The cellar of the house was examined, but no purse was found, and there was no shrubbery in the cellar. "Kalua" tried to write Hawaiian, but the only "ordinary" words deciphered were "lei" (meaning *wreaths*, which he made daily for Mr. Briggs) which was written clearly and frequently, and an attempt at "aloha"-greeting. Phinuit tried to get the answer to the question where Kalua's father was, but could only succeed in getting "Hiram." But the writing gave the answer "Hawaiian Islands." In reply to the question which one, the answer in writing was Kawai, but Phinuit said Tawai. The word is spelt Kawai, but is pronounced Tawai by the natives of the island itself and in the island where Kalua was born. The natives of the other islands call it Kawai.

Cases in which the lucidity or clairvoyant faculty is not limited to the present, but apparently anticipates the future, are sufficiently important to deserve a separate chapter; for it is manifestly extremely difficult to contemplate such a faculty.

## CHAPTER X

## PREVISION

**H**ITHERTO we have dealt only with knowledge of the present and the past ; but assertions are made that there is a kind of lucidity occasionally attainable by healthy people which is beyond the powers of *any* ordinary intelligence, even aided by telepathy ; inasmuch as knowledge is sometimes exhibited not only of occurrences at a distance but also of events which have not yet happened, and which could not by any process of reasoning be inferred.

Is it possible to become aware of events before they have occurred, by means other than ordinary scientific prediction ?

The anticipation of future events is a power not at all necessarily to be expected on a Spiritistic or any other hypothesis ; it is a separate question, and will have important bearings of its own. An answer to this question in the affirmative may vitally affect our metaphysical notions of "Time," but will not of necessity have an immediate bearing on the existence in the universe of intelligences other than our own. A cosmic picture gallery (as Mr. Myers calls it), or photographic or phonographic record of all that has occurred or will occur in the universe, may conceivably—or perhaps not conceivably—in some sense exist, and may be partly open and dimly decipherable to the lucid part of the automatist's or entranced person's mind.

But the question for us now is whether we can obtain clear and unmistakable proof of the existence of this foreseeing power in any form. It is not an easy thing to establish beyond any kind of doubt. Casual and irresponsible critics have said that documentary evidence, such as a postmark on a letter



which detailed an event either not yet happened or certainly not known by ordinary methods at the date of the postmark (like a recent shipwreck in mid-ocean for instance), would be proof positive to them of something occult. A writer in *The Nineteenth Century* goes so far as to say that a document thus officially verified by a Post Office clerk would be worth thousands of pounds to the British Museum. If so it would be singularly easy to get rich. I believe that a postmark on an envelope would satisfy some of these critics ! but a postmark on the document itself would be entirely convincing.

I wonder some enterprising forger has not endeavoured to gull a leading journal by an elaborate account say, of the *Victoria* disaster, or the Santander explosion, or the Messina earthquake, written on foolscap paper transmitted blank through the post, at small cost, in preparation for any such striking event ; or perhaps on paper subsequently covered with previous postmarks by a genial Post Office friend, and decorated with red tape by a live Government clerk !

The feeling that everything done by a Post Office official is conclusive, is of the same order as the opinion that barristers or criminal judges or medical practitioners are the only people fit to investigate unusual mental phenomena, because their practice makes them familiar with the warpings of the human mind.

But to consider the case of a medical practitioner ; as I understand a doctor's business, it is to cure an abnormality if he can, not to prolong and investigate it. True, a doctor may be a scientific man in addition, but *qua* physician he is out of his element as a general investigator, and as a leading practitioner he has very little spare time. Were it not so, the record against the profession—the attitude the main body of doctors has taken or used to take to everything new—would be not only pitiful, as it is, but essentially disgraceful.

But about this question of postmarks. Let it not be thought that I claim that their evidence is worthless. As evidence subsidiary to testimony they may be very valuable, and every effort should be made to

get them ; my contention only is that they do not dispense with testimony.

This I hold is the function of all circumstantial evidence, or of any automatic record ; it lessens the chance of self-delusion or over-exuberant imagination, it can never be held to guard against fraud. If a couple of friends by interchanging letters, with their dates verified in some cold-blooded official manner, are able to establish foreknowledge of events such as could hardly be guessed or inferred, then their testimony is strengthened by the date-marks to this extent :—Either the things happened as they say, or they are in some sort of collusion to bear false witness and deceive. One could only grant them the loophole of self-deception on the alternative of something very like insanity.

That is how these automatic records, photographs and the like, may be so valuable—as supplementary to human testimony—never as substitutes for it.

### ANTICIPATION OF EVENTS

Have we any trustworthy evidence at all as to the power of foreseeing unpredictable events ? Strange to say, we have, but it is not yet sufficient in volume to justify any generalisation : it is only enough to cause us to keep an open mind, even in this direction, and be ready critically to scrutinise future evidence as it arrives. Mrs. Sidgwick's paper on the evidence for Premonitions is in vol. v. of *Proceedings S.P.R.*

I attach no high importance to predictions of illness and death : they may represent an unusual power of diagnosis, but need not represent anything more. Besides, a great number of these predictions fail ; so much so that a prediction of this kind now hardly perturbs an experienced person who receives it.

And even the successful prevision of an accident must be attributed as a rule to accidental concordance unless it is accompanied by an exceptional amount of detail.

The following case is contained in Mrs. Sidgwick's paper, *Proceedings*, vol. v. p. 333. It is from an engine-driver who was interviewed afterwards by an agent of the S.P.R. in America.

[In 1853] I was firing a locomotive, a fine new passenger engine, built for speed, and just from the shop. I thought myself lucky to be on such a fine engine, and was proud of my position. One night, May 29th, 1853, I dreamed that the train ran through a shallow cut, and came out on a high stone bridge, over which the train passed, and then the engine turned over down the bank some 70 feet, into the river. I mentioned my dream the next morning to the family with whom I was living. The lady [now dead] told me I was going to be killed, but I told her that in my dream I had assurance that I should not be hurt. On the second morning after my dream, we were sent over a part of the road with which I was not familiar, and presently came to a shallow cut, and I saw a number of men ahead on the track. The engineer was near-sighted and did not see them. I called to him to stop the engine; he tried to do so, but the track was wet, and seeing that part of the track ahead had been taken up, he jumped from the engine. I remained on it and tried to stop it. Before this could be done, we were on a stone bridge, and I could not get off. The engine left the track, and at the other end of the bridge turned over twice before it reached the bottom, and I with it, receiving but a small scratch, *how* I do not know. I climbed the bank, and looking back, saw just what I had seen in my dream. The bridge was 200 feet long, with five stone arches, 54 feet high, and the bank down which the engine rolled 70 feet.

### THE MARMONTEL CASE

The perception of incidents at a distance is common enough, but the perception of incidents in the future is rare. The following selection from experiences of this kind received by Mrs. Verrall must serve as an example of the few trustworthy cases I know of (*Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. xx. p. 331).

On December 11th, 1901—*i.e.* towards the end of the first year in which Mrs. Verrall had developed the power of automatic writing—her hand wrote as follows:—

Nothing too mean, the trivial helps, gives confidence. Hence this. Frost and a candle in the dim light. Marmontel, he was

reading on a sofa or in bed—there was only a candle's light. She will surely remember this. The book was lent, not his own—he talked about it.

Then there appeared a fanciful but unmistakable attempt at the name Sidgwick.

No meaning was conveyed by the above, but the concluding effort naturally suggested that Mrs. Sidgwick should be applied to. This was done; and her reply, received on December 17th, said that she could make nothing of it but would report if the name Marmontel turned up.

Mrs. Verrall was now away from home and had decided to abandon writing till her return. But all the 17th she was so disturbed by a desire to write that she made time, and that evening obtained the following:—

I wanted to write. Marmontel is right. It was a French book, a Memoir I think. Passy may help, Souvenirs de Passy, or Fleury. Marmontel was not on the cover—the book was bound and was lent—two volumes in old-fashioned binding and print. It is not in any papers—it is an attempt to make some one remember—an incident.

“Soon after my return to Cambridge—Mrs. Verrall reports—about December 25th, 1901, I was looking through a list of books—which I had glanced at before December 11th—and found an advertisement of “Marmontel, *Moral Tales*, selected and translated by G. Saintsbury.” This, strange though such an admission may seem, was, as far as I could remember, my first conscious knowledge of Marmontel as a French writer.”

So ends the record of the obtaining of the script. The sentence in the first portion “She will surely remember this” is a characteristic *sotto voce* remark which is not infrequent in these scripts,—having the same sort of signification as the terminal sentence of the second portion. It means that Mrs. Verrall herself will surely remember having obtained the writing, when at some future time the incident described is referred to.

Now begins the verification by quite unexpected means.

In January 1902 Mrs. Verrall happened to write to a friend of hers named Mr. Marsh, asking him to come for a week-end visit ; and he replied fixing March 1st. She had had no recent communication with him since June 1901. On February 23rd she sent him a post card to remind him of his visit, and he replied with a letter on February 24th.

Mrs. Verrall then reports as follows :—

“ On March 1st Mr. Marsh arrived, and that evening at dinner he mentioned that he had been reading Marmontel. I asked if he had read the *Moral Tales*, and he replied that it was the *Memoirs*. I was interested in this reference to Marmontel, and asked Mr. Marsh for particulars about his reading, at the same time explaining the reasons for my curiosity. He then told me that he got the book from the London Library, and took the first volume only to Paris with him, where he read it on the evening of February 20th, and again on February 21st. On each occasion he read by the light of a candle ; on the 20th he was in bed, on the 21st lying on two chairs. He talked about the book to the friends with whom he was staying in Paris. The weather was cold, but there was, he said, no frost. The London Library copy is bound, as most of their books are, not in modern binding, but the name ‘ Marmontel ’ is on the back of the volume. The edition has three volumes ; in Paris Mr. Marsh had only one volume, but at the time of his visit to us he had read the second also.

“ I asked him whether ‘ Passy ’ or ‘ Fleury ’ would ‘ help,’ and he replied that Fleury’s name certainly occurred in the book, in a note ; he was not sure about Passy, but undertook to look it up on his return to town, and to ascertain, as he could by reference to the book, what part of the first volume he had been reading in Paris. He is in the habit of reading in bed, but has electric light in his bedroom at home, so that he had not read ‘ in bed or on a sofa by candlelight ’ for months, until he read Marmontel in Paris.

“ On his return to town Mr. Marsh wrote to me (March 4, 1902), that on February 21st while lying on

two chairs he read a chapter in the first volume of Marmontel's *Memoirs* describing the finding at Passy of a panel, etc., connected with a story in which Fleury plays an important part.

"It will thus be noted that the script in December, 1901, describes (as [presumably] past) an incident which actually occurred two and a half months later, in February, 1902,—an incident which at the time of writing was not likely to have been foreseen by any one. I ascertained from Mr. Marsh that the idea of reading Marmontel occurred to him not long before his visit to Paris. It is probable that had he not seen me almost immediately upon his return, when his mind was full of the book, I should never have heard of his reading it, and therefore not have discovered the application of the scripts of December 11th and 17th.

"The description is definite, and in the main accurate. There are, however, errors:—Though the weather was cold, it does not seem to have been actually freezing on either of the two nights in question; the book was not in two volumes only, as seems implied, though only two volumes had been read when the incident was related to me; the name Marmontel was on the back of the book, though not on the face of the cover; the binding, though not modern, can hardly be described as old-fashioned. But the reference to Passy and Fleury—names which, so far as I can discover, are not together in any passage of Marmontel's *Memoirs* except that read by Mr. Marsh on February 21st—is a precise and, I think, remarkable coincidence."

Two other points may be noted:—

(1) That the script on December 17th did not accept the suggestion that the name Marmontel had anything to do with Mrs. Sidgwick;

(2) The omission to give any name to the reader of Marmontel.

This latter kind of reticence is characteristic of the script; and, although it may be superficially regarded from a sarcastic point of view, it is really essential to the

verification of the prevision, because if Mr. Marsh's name had been given, Mrs. Verrall would naturally have written to him a premature inquiry, which would have spoilt the whole thing.

But inasmuch as she had no inkling of Mr. Marsh in connexion with it, that gentleman was left unconsciously to carry out the anticipation, entirely ignorant of it and uninfluenced by it.

The anticipation received in December was fulfilled in February and was reported on in March.

The fact that the anticipation was received in December is proved by the preservation of Mrs. Sidgwick's letter of December 17th saying that she could make nothing of it, but that if the name turned up in some manuscripts she was then reading she would let Mrs. Verrall know.

#### DISCUSSION OF POSSIBILITY

In his book Mr. Myers contemplated the occurrence of prevision, and dealt with it in many an eloquent passage. The following is too eloquent for the incident just quoted, but it serves to illustrate his view of the possibility of such things :—

“ Few men have pondered long on these problems of Past and Future without wondering whether Past and Future be in very truth more than a name—whether we may not be apprehending as a stream of sequence that which is an ocean of co-existence, and slicing our subjective years and centuries from timeless and absolute things. The precognitions dealt with here, indeed, hardly overpass the life of the individual percipient. Let us keep to that small span, and let us imagine that a whole earth-life is in reality an absolutely instantaneous although an infinitely complex phenomenon. Let us suppose that my transcendental self discerns with equal directness and immediacy every element of this phenomenon ; but that my empirical self receives each element

mediately, and through media involving different rates of retardation ; just as I receive the lightning more quickly than the thunder. May not then seventy years intervene between my perceptions of birth and death as easily as seven seconds between my perceptions of the flash and the peal ? And may not some inter-communication of consciousness enable the wider self to call to the narrower, the more central to the more external, ' At such an hour this shock will reach you ! Listen for the nearing roar ! ' "

But let us consider whether there is any way of regarding the fulfilment of a meaningless anticipation—such as this of the Marmontel case, just quoted—without trenching on so difficult a question as the reality of time ?

I can only suggest something of the nature of hypnotic suggestion, automatically effected. An outside or, let us say, a subliminal intelligence gets the record made by Mrs. Verrall that an unspecified man will read Marmontel on a frosty night lying on a sofa by candle light, etc., and then sets to work to try and secure that within the next two or three months some man shall do it—some one who is sufficiently a friend of Mrs. Verrall to make it reasonably likely that in subsequent conversation she may sooner or later hear of the circumstance.

I make the suggestion for what it is worth, as the only way that occurs to me of avoiding still more difficult notions ;—provided of course we do not dismiss the whole thing as invention—which is preposterous,—or as chance, which in my judgment is put out of court by the amount of detail, and by other incidents of the same *general* nature as this one which have also occurred in Mrs. Verrall's script.

It may be asked what possible object there can be in thus predicting a perfectly unimportant and commonplace incident.

The object, to those associated with the work of the Society for Psychical Research, is manifest enough.



During the lifetime of Professor Sidgwick and Mr. Myers we often discussed what sort of evidence could be regarded as conclusive as to the existence of supernormal, even if not posthumous, intelligence. And it was agreed that prediction of future events of an insignificant kind, such as could not be inferred or deduced by however wide a knowledge of contemporary events,—incidents which were outside the range of any amount of historical or mathematical or political skill,—would be conclusive, if obtained in quantity sufficient to eliminate chance. It did not at all follow that such anticipations were *possible*,—so far as we could tell they might be beyond not only normal but supernormal powers,—but if possible it was realised that they would be singularly satisfactory.

Accordingly it is eminently characteristic of an intelligence purporting to be associated in any way with the late Professor Sidgwick or the late Mr. Myers that attempts of that kind should be made. Several attempts have now been made with more or less success, and I have selected one of them. Others will be found in Mrs. Verrall's paper (*Proceedings*, vol. xx.) in the chapter called "Future Events."

END OF SECTION III.

## SECTION IV

### AUTOMATISM AND LUCIDITY

#### CHAPTER XI

##### AUTOMATIC WRITING AND TRANCE SPEECH

WE now enter upon the more detailed consideration of a group of facts, in which of late years the Society has been remarkably prolific—and the general truth of which is accepted without hesitation by all the prominent members; who, though they differ in their interpretation, yet receive the evidence with practical unanimity as to its interest and importance—receive it, that is to say, with all the unanimity that we desire or expect.

The facts have led some observers to the rather vague and ill-defined hypothesis that vistas of unlimited information lie open to people in a clairvoyant state; as if during unconsciousness a psychical region were entered wherein the ordinary barriers between soul and soul, or mind and mind, are broken down. Even this surmise must not be rejected without examination, if we are driven to it, but it is not a known *vera causa*.

Naturally it is only when all normal means of obtaining information have been scrupulously avoided that any problem arises; but it is generally agreed that the first hypothesis that must be made, whenever normal explanations thoroughly break down, is that telepathy of some kind is occurring from some living person and is influencing the sensitive mind or brain of the unconscious or partially unconscious operator, after the fashion of an objectified and sympathetic dream.

This hypothesis is extremely elastic, and can be

stretched to cover an immense area ; indeed, to get beyond it, and definitely find a region which it will not cover, is exceedingly difficult. For twenty years at least members of the society have been intimately acquainted with excellent and astonishing examples of trance speaking and automatic writing, and yet they have hesitated to make full use of all this material, and have refrained from proceeding in the direction towards which it undoubtedly points, so long as there was a chance—even a remote chance—that an established variety of telepathy or some extension of it might constitute a sufficient explanation. Some seem able to hold that telepathy from living people is still sufficient—or at least as sufficient as it has ever been—and that no further step beyond it need be taken. Others are impressed with the idea—not without qualms and surviving hesitation—that the time has come when it may be legitimate and necessary to take a further step, and to admit, as a working theory, the view which undoubtedly the phenomena themselves suggest—the view they have all the time been, as it were, forcing upon us ; namely, that there can be actual telepathic or telergic influence from some outside intelligence—the surviving intelligence, apparently, of some of those who have recently lived on this planet. These are represented as occasionally, under great difficulties and discouragements, endeavouring to make known the fact that they can communicate with us, by aid of such intervening mechanism as is placed at their disposal—such as the brain nerve and muscle of an automatist or medium. The assertion made is that, during the temporary suspension of the normal control, discarnate intelligences can with difficulty make use of these organs for the purpose of translating their own thought into mechanical movement, and so producing some kind of speech or writing in the physical world. Such utilisation of physiological apparatus, by an intelligence to which it does not normally belong, is what is called *motor automatism*, or “telergy,” or popularly—when of an extreme kind—“possession.”

It does not by any means follow that the agent or intelligence, active in this unusual experience, is necessarily that of a departed person, but that is undoubtedly the form which the phenomenon often takes ; so if we resign ourselves to be guided by facts at all, we may as well try how far the claim openly and persistently made will carry us, before definitely discarding it. And if we are going to try it at all, I urge that we had better try it frankly and thoroughly : it had better be accepted provisionally as a working hypothesis and pressed as far as it will go. That is the way to test any provisional hypothesis. Hesitate as long as you like before giving a theory even provisional and tentative acceptance ; but, once having determined on testing a key or theoretical solution, then utilise it to the utmost. Try it in all the locks ; and if it continually fails to open them, reject it ; but do not hesitate each time over the insertion of the key. Hesitate before accepting a working hypothesis, not after. If false, its falseness will become apparent by its failure and inability to fit the facts.

Mr. Myers himself pointed out in *Human Personality*, vol. i. p. 250, that if we allow ourselves to contemplate such a hypothesis it will at least fit in with many other facts ; the innovation that we are called upon to make is to suppose that segments of the personality can operate in apparent separation from the organism. ' Such a supposition, of course, could not have been started without proof of telepathy, and could with difficulty be sustained without proof of survival of death. But, given telepathy, we have *some* psychical agency, connected with man, operating apart from his organism. Given survival, we have an element of his personality—to say the least of it—operating when his organism is destroyed. There is therefore no very great additional burden in supposing that an element of his personality may operate apart from his organism, while that organism still exists.

" *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte.* If we have

once got a man's *thought* operating apart from his body—if my fixation of attention on, say, the two of diamonds does somehow so modify another man's brain a few yards off that he seems to see the two of diamonds floating before him—there is no obvious halting place on *his* side till we come to 'possession' by a departed spirit, and there is no obvious halting place on *my* side till we come to 'travelling clairvoyance,' with a corresponding visibility of my own phantasm to other persons in the scenes which I spiritually visit."

### MIND AND BODY

So let us consider in the first place what occurs during the ordinary process of speaking or writing—speaking or writing of the most normal or commonplace kind. An idea is conceived in the mind, but in order to achieve some effect in the material world it must move matter. The movement or rearrangement of matter is all that we ourselves are able to accomplish in the physical universe: the whole of our direct terrestrial activities resolve themselves into this, the production of changes of motion and arrangement.

But a thought belongs to a different order of existence; whatever it is, it is not material; it is neither matter nor force; it has no direct power over matter. Directly and unaided it can move nothing. How then can it get itself translated in terms of motion? How can it, from the psychical category, produce a physical effect?

Physiology informs us, not indeed of the whole manner of the achievement, but of part at least of the method.

The thing that can move matter is called muscle. In muscle is located the necessary energy, which only requires to be stimulated into activity in order to be transformed into visible motion and transferred in any required direction.

In a living body, means are provided for stimulating its muscles, in the shape of an intricate arrangement of

nerve fibres, which, when themselves excited in one of many ways, can cause the muscle to contract. This part of the process is not indeed fully understood, but it is familiarly known. The excitation of the nerves *may* be a mere random tweaking, or irritation, by a mechanical or electric goad ; but in a living organism it can also be produced in a more meaningful and economical fashion, by the discharge of energy from a central cell, such as exists in the cortex or grey matter of the brain. This process may also be considered as comparatively though not completely understood ; the central ganglion is clearly the direct means of getting the nerve excited, the muscle contracted, and the direct motion produced. But what is it that stimulates the brain ? What is it that desires the particular motion and liberates energy from the appropriate brain cell ? In some cases it is mere reflex action : it is some stimulus which has arrived from the peripheral nerve-endings, so as to evoke response in a central ganglion—say, in the spine or the cerebellum—whence the stimulus has proceeded to a neighbouring cell and so to the efferent nerve fibres. In that case no consciousness is involved ; the psychical element is absent ; there is no intelligence or will in the process, nor any necessary sensation. The wriggling of a worm, and many contortions of the lower animals, may be—shall we say, may be hoped to be ?—of this order.

But I am not taking the case of reflex and unconscious action ; I am definitely postulating a thought or idea conceived in the mind—operating, so to speak, on the will—and determining that there shall be a response in the material world. By what means the stimulus gets out of the psychical region into the physical, and liberates energy from the brain centre, I have not the remotest idea ; nor, I venture to say, has any one.

The operation is at present mysterious. But conspicuously it occurs ; it is evidently a rational and I should say an ultimately intelligible process,—a process, that is to say, on which discovery is possible, though at present there has been no discovery concerning it.

Somehow or other the connexion is established ; and by long habit it seems to be established in normal cases without difficulty—nay, rather with singular ease, as when a pianist executes in miraculous fashion a complicated sonata.

Things may go wrong, energy may be liberated in the wrong direction, the wrong muscles may be stimulated, so that stammering and contortions result. Or the mental connexion may be in a state of suspense, the mind may be unable to get at the right centre, so to speak, and may refrain from acting on any for a time ; in which case we have hesitation, aphasia, feebleness of many kinds, up to paralysis. Or these effects may be due to faults and dislocation in the physiological mechanism,—faults which can perhaps be discovered and set right. If the brain centres are fatigued, also, the response is weak and uncertain. But when everything physiological is in good health, and when the conscious self is in good condition, with a definite thought that it wants to convey, then it appears to be able to play upon the brain, as a musician plays upon a keyboard, and to get its psychical content translated into terms of mechanical motion ; so that other intelligences, sufficiently sympathetic and suitably provided with receptive mechanism, can be made more or less aware of the idea intended to be conveyed. Which means that, by aid of their nerve fibres and brain centres, mechanical movements can be translated back into thought once more.

That is the usual process, from mind to mind through physiological apparatus and physical mechanism. The physical mechanism is a neutral intermediary of non-living matter, belonging to nobody ; or rather belonging equally to everybody. We can all throw the air into vibration ; and at some public meetings everybody does so, at one and the same time, with some resulting confusion. We can all write with ink ; and if need be we can dip our pens into our neighbours' inkstand and use his desk, though with some loss of convenience ;—we find it difficult to lay our hands upon his notepaper,

and it is not efficacious if, on finding his cheque-book; we proceed to fill up and sign his cheques. The *identity* of the scribe then becomes an important consideration. Pretended identity in such cases may perturb the social conscience, and be stigmatised not merely as unrecognised and wrongful possession, but as fraud.

Thus of all existing forms of matter there are certainly some which can be used intelligently though temporarily by people to whom they do not belong. But whatever may be the indiscriminating communism of the main part of the physical universe, the physiological part is undoubtedly appropriated by individuals; body No. 1 belongs definitely to operator No. 1, and body No. 2 to operator No. 2. And the common idea—I might say the common-sense idea—is that operator No. 1 is entirely limited to control over his own physiological apparatus, and has no direct means of getting at the apparatus of another person otherwise than through neutral physical means. That is the natural *prima facie* notion, based upon ordinary experience; but it need not be exactly true or complete,—facts may turn up which suggest something different or supplementary.

As a matter of fact, telepathy has suggested—without any necessary reference to the physiological part of the business—that mind can act directly on mind, and can thereby indirectly operate on the physical world through the organism of another person. But cases also occur where the *mind* of the second person appears to be left out of the process altogether; he may be thinking his own thoughts or doing nothing particular,—in a state of unconsciousness perhaps, or at any rate of inattention,—and yet his physiological mechanism may be set in action, and his physical neighbourhood affected in such a way as to suggest a stimulus proceeding not from himself at all, but from the mind of another person; who in this case must be conceived as operating not upon the second mind, but directly upon its brain. Or if not upon the brain, then perhaps upon some other portion of the nervous system,—say, upon spinal or other ganglia not essentially or necessarily associated with



consciousness, and not arousing any consciousness, but stimulating the parts usually controlled by the sub-consciousness,—the parts which regulate the beating of the heart, the respiration of the lungs, the digestion or secretions of the body.

Assuming that such a thing is possible,—assuming that a mind can operate, not only as usual on its own body, not only telepathically as supposed on another mind, but directly and telergically upon another body,—then that is exactly what is meant by a case of incipient or partial possession.

So far, it may be said, we have no *a priori* reason to doubt its occurrence, and no *a priori* reason to expect it. We know nothing about the connexion between mind and body, except that the brain is the specially appropriate organ or instrument for the purpose; and accordingly we are not entitled to any *a priori* views. We know that each organism is usually appropriated by, and belongs to, the special psychical character or unit which commonly employs it; just as a violin belongs to a special operator, who might resent any other person, especially a novice, attempting to play upon it. The desk of an author is his private property, from which a certain class of literature usually emanates; and he might not like to see it used for works of fiction, or scandalous gossip, or the advocacy of vaccination, or vegetarianism, or Christian Science, or tariff reform. But that proves nothing as to the impossibility of so utilising it. The power may exist, but may be in abeyance, or be recognised as inappropriate and inconvenient, or even as dangerous and illegal.

But if the power exist, it is a fact worth knowing. If it is possible for the normal operator to go out for a walk and leave his writing mechanism open to the casual tramp or the enterprising visitor, it is a definite fact that we may as well know.

Now as to the power of dislocation or suspension of the usual connexion between mind and body, it is supposed more or less to occur during sleep; it is certainly supposed to occur during trance; and, in case

of what is called travelling clairvoyance, it would appear to be in some sort a demonstrable fact.

Anyhow, it is orthodox—not scientifically orthodox, but religiously orthodox—to maintain that the connexion between ourselves and our organism is only temporary, and that at what we call “death” we shall give up this material mode of manifestation for ever: so that the body resolves itself into its original elements. And it is usually supposed that, after having lost control of our appropriate and normally possessed bodily organs, even though we still persist as psychical entities, we have in our new state no means of operating upon the physical world. No more can we move pieces of matter; no more can we stimulate ideas in the minds of our friends when we are “dead.” No, not unless one of three things happens.

*First*, the telepathic power may continue; and we may operate directly on conscious or unconscious minds of living persons in such a way as to cause *them* to produce some physical effect or record, by normal means, through their own accustomed mechanism.

*Second*, a materialising power may continue, analogous to that which enabled us, when here on the planet, to assimilate all sorts of material, to digest it and arrange it into the organism that served us as a body. It is extraordinarily difficult to conceive of such a power, and impossible to suppose that it can be a direct power of a psychical agency unaided by the reproductive activity of any other unit already incarnate; because such a power would imply a control of mind over matter which by hypothesis we conceive does not in fact exist, save through the mechanism of a brain. Such action we might well consider to be miracle.

Still something of the kind has been asserted to occur; though always, I believe, in the presence of some peculiarly disposed organism or medium.

*Thirdly*, a telergic power, analogous to that which we have already supposed occasionally active, may exist; enabling the psychical unit to detect and make use of some fully developed physiological mechanism,

not belonging to it,—a fully developed brain, shall we say, with nerves and muscles complete;—so that, during temporary vacation by the usual possessor, these may be utilised for a time, and may achieve, in an unpractised and more or less blundering fashion, some desired influence upon the physical world. In such a case the operator may be understood as contriving to utter, in speech or writing, something like the message which he intends to convey to his otherwise occupied and inaccessible but still beloved friends.

Affection need not be the only motive, however, which causes a given operator to take all the trouble, and go through the process of using other people's writing materials,—at the risk of rousing superstition and fright or being ejected by medical treatment. Occasionally it may be a scientific interest surviving from the time in this life when he was a keen and active member of the S.P.R. ; so that he desires above all things to convey to his friends, engaged on the same quest, some assurance, not only of his continued individual existence,—in which, on religious grounds, they may imagine that they already believe,—but of his retention of a power to communicate indirectly and occasionally with them, and to produce movements even in the material world,—by kind permission of an organism, or part of an organism, the temporary use or possession of which has been allowed him for that purpose.

### IDENTITY

The question of identity is of course a fundamental one. The control must prove his identity mainly by reproducing facts which belong to *his* memory and not to that of the automatist. And notice that proof of identity will usually depend on the memory of trifles. The objection, frequently raised, that communications too often relate to trivial subjects, shows a lack of intelligence, or at least of due thought, on the part of

the critic. The object is to get, not something dignified, but something evidential: and what evidence of persistent memory can be better than the recollection of trifling incidents which for some personal reason happen to have made a permanent impression? Do we not ourselves remember domestic trifles more vividly than things which to the outside world seem important? Wars and coronations are affairs read of in newspapers—they are usually far too public to be of use as evidence of persistent identity; but a broken toy, or a family joke, or a schoolboy adventure, has a more personal flavour, and is of a kind more likely to be remembered in old age, or after a rending shock.

In fiction this is illustrated continually. Take the case of identification of the dumb and broken savage, apparently an Afghan prowler, in *The Man Who Was*. What was it that opened the eyes of the regiment, to which he had crawled back from Siberia, to the fact that twenty years ago he was one of themselves? Knowledge of a trick-catch in a regimental flower-vase, the former position of a trophy on the wall, and the smashing of a wineglass after a loyal toast. That is true to life: it is probably true to death also.

That is the kind of evidence which we ought to expect, and that is the kind of evidence which not infrequently we get. We have not been able to hold it sufficient, however. The regiment in Kipling's tale never thought of unconscious telepathy from themselves, as spoiling the testimony to be drawn from the uncouth savage's apparent reminiscence: such an explanation would have been rightly felt to have been too forced and improbable, and exaggeratedly sceptical. But when it comes to proof of surviving existence and of memory beyond the tomb, we are bound to proceed even to this length, and to discount the witness of anything that is in our own minds; or, as some think, in the mind of any living person.

Thus is the difficulty of incontrovertible proof of identity enormously increased. Even when the evidence enables a hidden thing to be discovered of which no

one living possessed the secret—as in Swedenborg's discovery of the dead burgomaster's private papers above quoted, p. 96—deferred telepathy is sometimes adduced as preferable to what must then seem to most, as it did to Swedenborg, if not to Kant, the only rational explanation.

## CHAPTER XII

## PERSONAL IDENTITY

IN illustration of the remarks made at end of last chapter, the following is a favourable instance of the mode in which evidence is given to prove identity in cases of automatic writing: it was described by Mr. Stainton Moses to Edmund Gurney and F. W. H. Myers, while it was still fresh, on his first meeting with them, May 9th, 1874. It is to be understood that he was an automatic writer, and one of those who could, as it were, "converse" with the script as it emanated from his own unconscious hand. He was accustomed alternately to write a conscious question and then to receive an unconscious or subliminal answer—his hand being apparently guided by an intelligence not his own. The record runs thus :—

On the evening of April 8th, 1874, while at Bedford with his father and mother, Mr. Stainton Moses, who had been receiving messages about ancient religions during the day, began to ask a question, "I should like—," when a meaningless drawing was made in place of intended words.

Q. What is all that? And why was I stopped?

A. "A spirit wished to communicate, and we are commanded to permit her. She is not able to write with ease, but will communicate through us. Her name is Fanny Westoby. Do you know the name?"

Q. I do not remember.

A. "Your mother knows her well. She is a cousin of hers. She passed from your earth May 15th last."

Q. Was she married?

- A. "Yes, her maiden name was Kirkham."
- Q. Fanny Kirkham. Yes, I have a dim remembrance. She used to live at Markby.
- A. "She says that she was born in Alford, in the house now occupied by Sam Stevenson. She then lived at Markby, and, having married, at Belchford. She passed away at Horncastle, at 63 years of age. You do not remember her, when, in the year 1845, you went to see her at Markby. Her mother, Elizabeth Kirkham, was then just released from a lingering illness, and your mother had gone to condole with her cousin. You were taken round the farm, and rode on a goat (she is anxious on this point), and she threw you in sport into a heap of wheat which was being threshed. The result was that you were severely bitten by the harvest bug. She is very anxious that you should recall this to your mother."
- Q. I will, but is it wise?
- A. "You will not be able to induce her to search into this matter, but you may satisfy yourself that what is said is true."
- Q. Has she any message?
- A. "She says, 'I lost much of my opportunity for progress through the gratification of bodily appetite, which cast me back. My course of progress is yet to come. I find my present life not very different from yours. I am nearly the same. I wish I could influence Mary, but I can't get near her.'"
- Q. Can she assure me that she is F. W.?
- A. "She can give you no further evidence. Stay, ask your father about Donnington and the trap-door."
- Q. I have not the least idea what she means. All the better. I will ask. Any more? Is she happy?
- A. "She is as happy as may be in her present state."
- Q. How did she find me out?
- A. "She came by chance, hovering near her friend [*i.e.* Mrs. Moses], and discovered that she could communicate. She will return now."
- Q. Can I help her?
- A. "Yes, pray. She and all of us are helped when you devote your talents willingly to aid us."
- Q. What do you mean?
- A. "In advocating and advancing our mission with care and judgment. Then we are permeated with joy. May the Supreme bless you.
- +RECTOR"

On this Mr. Stainton Moses comments thus:—I have inquired of my mother and find the particulars given are exactly true. She wonders how I remember things that occurred when I was only 5 years old! I

have not ventured to say how I got the information, believing that it would be unwise and useless. My father I can get nothing out of about the trap-door. He either does not remember, or will not say.

April 9th, 1874. My father has remembered this incident. A trap-door led on to the roof in the house he occupied at Donnington. The house was double roofed, and a good view could be had from it. F. K. on a visit wanted to go there, and got fixed halfway, amid great laughter.

[We have verified Mrs. Westoby's death in the Register of Deaths.—F. W. H. M.]

It is indeed seldom that particulars of date, place, and circumstance are given so glibly and fully as this. Communicators themselves usually appear confused about these more precise details; but an ostensible reporter, having obtained the information from them at leisure, can sometimes quote it through an automatist with fair accuracy, as in the case above.

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Another striking case is that of the lady known here as "Blanche Abercromby"; though in this case the concealment of real name removes some of the interest that would otherwise be felt in it. When the communication arrived through Mr. Stainton Moses's hand he was not aware of her death—nor did he know her at all well; in fact, he had only met her and her husband once, at some séance, and had been annoyed at the strongly expressed disbelief of her husband in the possibility of such things.

Part of the communication, the part in special handwriting, purports to be a hasty *amende* for this incredulity, at the earliest, posthumous opportunity. Mr. Myers examined this case carefully, being much interested in some features of it. The pages of the notebook in which the writing occurred had been gummed down and marked "private," nor had they apparently been mentioned to any one at the time. But years later, after the death of Mr. Stainton Moses,

this and other books came into Mr. Myers's hands, and with the consent of the executors he opened this portion.

He was surprised to find a written communication entirely characteristic of a lady known to him, here called Blanche Abercromby, who had died on a Sunday afternoon, nearly forty years ago now, at a country house about two hundred miles from London. He found that it was on the very same evening near midnight that the supernormal intimation of the death had reached Mr. Stainton Moses at his secluded lodgings in the north of London : and that afterwards the lady had ostensibly written a few lines herself. The evidence of the handwriting, which was in one point peculiar, is specifically testified to, not only by Mr. Myers, but by a member of the family, and by an expert (see *Human Personality*, vol. ii. p. 231, or *Proc. S.P.R.*, xi. 96 *et seq.*). It is unlikely that Mr. Moses had ever seen her writing.

The chances necessary to secure a verification of this case were more complex than can here be fully explained. This lady, who was quite alien to these researches, had been dead about twenty years when her posthumous letter was discovered in Mr. Moses's private notebook by one of the very few surviving persons who had both known her well enough to recognise the characteristic quality of the message, and were also sufficiently interested in spirit identity to get the handwritings compared and the case recorded.

The entries in the MS. book will now be quoted. The communications began with some obscure drawings, apparently representing the flight of a bird ; then in answer to a question as to the meaning it went on :—

A. " It is a spirit who has but just quitted the body. Blanche Abercromby in the flesh. I have brought her. No more. M."

Q. Do you mean Lady —— ?

No reply. [Sunday night about midnight. The information is unknown to me.]

(On Monday morning the script continues) :—

Q. I wish for information about last night. Is that true ? Was it Mentor ?



- A. "Yes, good friend, it was Mentor, who took pity on a spirit that was desirous to reverse former errors. She desires us to say so. She was ever an inquiring spirit, and was called suddenly from your earth. She will rest anon. One more proof has been now given of continuity of existence. Be thankful and meditate with prayer. Seek not more now, but cease. We do not wish you to ask any questions now.

+ I : S : D. x RECTOR "

A week later some matter of what must be called non-evidential quality appears ; but in this instance I propose to quote it because this is an important case.

Q. Can you write for me now ?

A. "Yes, the chief is here."

Q. How was it that spirit [Blanche Abercromby's] came to me ?

A. "The mind was directed to the subject, and being active, it projected itself to you. Moreover, we were glad to be able to afford you another proof of our desire to do what is in our power to bring home to you evidence of the truth of what we say."

Q. Is it correct to say that the direction of thought causes the spirit to be present ?

A. "In some cases it is so. Great activity of spirit, coupled with anxiety to discover truth and to seek into the hidden causes of things, continue to make it possible for a spirit to manifest. Moreover, direction of thought gives what you would call direction or locality to the thought. By that we mean that the instinctive tendency of the desire or thought causes a possibility of objective manifestation. Then by the help of those who, like ourselves, are skilled in managing the elements, manifestation becomes possible. This would not have been possible in this case, only that we took advantage of what would have passed unnoticed in order to work out another proof of the reality of our mission. It is necessary that there should be a combination of circumstances before such a manifestation can be possible. And that combination is rare. Hence the infrequency of such events, and the difficulty we have in arranging them : especially when anxiety enters into the matter, as in the case of a friend whose presence is earnestly desired. It might well be that so ready a proof as this might not occur again."

Q. Then a combination of favourable circumstances aided you. Will the spirit rest, or does it not require it ?

A. "We do not know the destiny of that spirit. It will pass out of our control. Circumstances enabled us to use its presence : but that presence will not be maintained."

- Q. If direction of thought causes motion, I should have thought it would be so with our friends, and that they would therefore be more likely to come.
- A. "It is not that alone. Nor is it so with all. All cannot come to earth. And not in all cases does volition or thought cause union of souls. Many other adjuncts are necessary before such can be. Material obstacles may prevent, and the guardians may oppose. We are not able to pursue the subject now, seeing that we write with difficulty. At another time we may resume. Cease for the present and do not seek further.

+ I : S : D. RECTOR "

A few days later, Mr. Moses wrote :—

- Q. The spirit B. A. began by drawing. Was it herself?
- A. "With assistance. She could not write. One day if she is able to return again, she will be more able to express her thoughts. . . ."

(A few days later.)

- A. "A spirit who has before communicated will write for you herself. She will then leave you, having given the evidence that is required.
- "I should much like to speak more with you, but it is not permitted. You have sacred truth. I know but little yet. I have much, much to learn.

BLANCHE ABERCROMBY.

"It is like my writing as evidence to you."

The statement that the writing of this particular message is like that of the lady's, was long afterwards verified with some care and trouble by Mr. Myers, and is correct, as stated more in detail above. The *amende*, and the sentence "I have much, much to learn," are characteristic. I have myself seen the writing, and was told at the time by Mr. Myers of all the circumstances.

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Attempts have been made, and are still made from time to time, to explain all this sort of thing—some of it by the recrudescence of lapsed memory, some of it by telepathy, and some of it by clairvoyance. If such attempts are regarded as successful how can it be

possible, by any means, to get over the difficulty and to establish the identity of any communicator? I reply

- (a) by gradually accumulated internal evidence, based on pertinacious and careful record;
- (b) by cross correspondences, or the reception of unintelligible parts of one consistent and coherent message, through different mediums;
- (c) by information or criteria specially characteristic of the supposed communicating intelligence; and, if possible, in some sense new to the world.

Cross-correspondence—that is, the reception of part of a message through one medium and part through another—is good evidence of one intelligence dominating both automatists; especially if the parts separately are unintelligible, so that they cannot be rationally signalled either by normal or supernormal means. And if the message is characteristic of some one particular deceased person, and is received through people to whom he was not intimately known, then it is fair proof of the continued intellectual activity of that personality. If further we get from him a piece of literary criticism which is eminently in his vein and has not occurred to ordinary people—not to either of the mediums, and not even to the literary world, but which on consideration is appreciated as sound as well as characteristic criticism, showing a familiar and wide knowledge of the poetry of many ages, and unifying apparently disconnected passages in some definite way,—then I say the proof, already striking, would tend to become crucial.

These, then, are the kinds of proof at which the Society is aiming. These are the kinds of proof which are in process of being attained.

## CHAPTER XIII

## BEGINNING OF THE CASE OF MRS. PIPER

THE most famous of recent thorough automatists, or trance speaking and trance writing mediums, is undoubtedly Mrs. Piper of Boston, U.S.A. With her an enormous amount of work has been done; and the *Proceedings* of the Society, both in the past and in future years, will bear witness to the richness and fertility of this case, as well as to the industry with which it has been pursued and its various stages studied. To give anything like a full account of even my own work in this direction—the merest fraction of the whole—would need much more space than it would be wise to expend on it in this book, so I shall select only such small portions as will give some idea of what happens, and refer students who wish to pursue the matter further to the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research.

As a prelude to the Report on the 1890 English series of sittings, which were the first that the Society published, Mr. Myers at that time wrote an Introduction from which I will make a few extracts, because they illustrate the kind of view which that experienced investigator at that time took of these in some respects novel phenomena.

## MR. F. W. H. MYERS'S EARLY TESTIMONY

“On certain external or preliminary points, all who have had adequate opportunity of judgment, are decisively agreed; but on the more delicate and interesting question as to the origin of the trance-utterances we cannot unite in any absolute view. We agree only in maintaining that the utterances show that knowledge

has been acquired by some intelligence in some super-normal fashion ;—and in urging on experimental psychologists the duty of watching for similar cases, and of analysing the results in some such way as we have endeavoured to do.

“ The study of trance-utterances, indeed, is at first sight distasteful ; since real and pretended trance-utterances have notoriously been the vehicle of much conscious and unconscious fraud. But we urge that, just as the physical and psychical phenomena of hysteria—long neglected as a mere jungle of trickeries—are now analysed with adequate security against deception, and with most fruitful results, so also these utterances are now capable of being rationally studied,—thanks to the advance in the comprehension of automatic phenomena which French and English effort during the last few years has achieved.

“ These utterances, although they often occur in hysterical subjects, seem to have no necessary connection with hysteria. Nor again have we any real ground for calling them morbid *per se*, although their excessive repetition may lead to morbid states. All that we can safely say is that they are a form of automatism ; that they constitute one of many classes of phenomena which occur in sane subjects without entering the normal waking consciousness or forming part of the habitual chain of memory.

“ In previous discussions automatism has been divided into active and passive types ; active automatism consisting of such phenomena as automatic writing and trance-utterance—passive, of hallucinations of sight, hearing, etc. ‘ The automatism may be called *active* if it finds a motor channel, *passive* if it finds a sensory channel, but the impulse whence it originates may be much the same in the one case as in the other.’

“ The unsubstantial character of trance-utterances in general is fully admitted. ‘ Trance-addresses are eminently barren of fact ; they generally show little more than a mere power of improvisation, which may

either be fraudulently practised, or may be a characteristic faculty of the unconscious self.'

"When, therefore, we were informed by trusted witnesses,—by Professor William James, who is a physician as well as a psychologist, and by Mr. Hodgson, whose acumen in the detection of imposture has been proved in more fields than one,—that the utterances of Mrs. Piper's trance did in their view unquestionably contain facts of which Mrs. Piper in her waking state was wholly ignorant, some inquiry into the character of this trance seemed to fall in the direct line of our work.

"However the specific trance-utterances may be interpreted, the case as a whole is a rare and remarkable one. It is an instance of automatism of that extreme kind where the upheaval of sub-conscious strata is not merely *local*, but affects, so to say, the whole psychical area ;—where a secondary consciousness not only crops up here and there through the primary, but for a time displaces it ;—where, in short, the whole personality appears to suffer intermittent change.

"These trances cannot always be induced at pleasure. A state of quiet expectancy or 'self-suggestion' will usually bring one on ; but sometimes the attempt altogether fails. We never attempted to induce the trance by hypnotism. We understand, indeed, that Mrs. Piper has never been deeply hypnotised, although Professor Richet tried on her some experiments of suggestion in the waking state, and found her somewhat 'suggestible.' On the other hand, the trance has occasionally appeared when it was not desired. The first time that it occurred (as Mrs. Piper informs us) it came as an unwelcome surprise. An instance of this kind occurred at Cambridge. Before going to bed she had, at my request, says Mr. Myers, and for the first time in her life, been looking into a crystal, with the desire to see therein some hallucinatory figure which might throw light on the nature of the mysterious secondary personality. She saw nothing ; but next morning she looked exhausted, and said that she thought that she had been entranced during the night. The next time that she

went into a trance Phinuit [which is the name she used to be known by when in the trance] said he had come and called, and no one had answered him. It appeared as though the concentration of thought upon the crystal had acted as a kind of self-suggestion, and had induced the secondary state, when not desired.

"The trance when induced generally lasted about an hour. On one occasion in my house, and I believe once at least in America, it only lasted for about a minute. Phinuit only had time to say that he could not remain, and then the habitual moaning began, and Mrs. Piper came to herself.

"There was often a marked difference between the first few minutes of a trance and the remaining time. On such occasions almost all that was of value would be told in the first few minutes; and the remaining talk would consist of vague generalities or mere repetitions of what had already been given. Phinuit, as will be seen, always professed himself to be a spirit communicating with spirits; and he used to say that he remembered their messages for a few minutes after 'entering into the medium,' and then became confused. He was not, however, apparently able to depart when his budget of facts was empty. There seemed to be some irresponsible letting-off of energy which must continue until the original impulse was lost in incoherence."

Mrs. Piper's case has been more or less continuously observed by Professor William James and others almost from the date of the first sudden inception of the trance, some twenty-five years ago. Dr. Hodgson was in the habit of bringing acquaintances of his own to Mrs. Piper, without giving their names; and many of these have heard from the trance-utterance facts about their dead relations, etc., which they feel sure that Mrs. Piper could not have known. Dr. Hodgson also had Mr. and Mrs. Piper watched or "shadowed" by private detectives for some weeks, with the view of discovering whether Mr. Piper (at that time alive and employed in a large store in Boston, U.S.A.) went about inquiring into the

affairs of possible "sitters," or whether Mrs. Piper received letters from friends or agents conveying information. This inquiry was pushed pretty closely, but absolutely nothing was discovered which could throw suspicion on Mrs. Piper,—who is now aware of the procedure, but has the good sense to recognise the legitimacy—I may say the scientific necessity—of this kind of probation.

It was thus shown that Mrs. Piper made no discoverable attempt to acquire knowledge even about persons whose coming she had reason to expect. Still less could she have been aware of the private concerns of persons brought anonymously to her house at Dr. Hodgson's choice.

"We took great pains," continues Mr. Myers, "to avoid giving information in talk; and a more complete security is to be found in the fact that we were ourselves ignorant of many of the facts given as to our friends' relations, etc. In the case of Mrs. Verrall, for instance, no one in Cambridge except Mrs. Verrall herself could have supplied the bulk of the information given; and some of the facts given Mrs. Verrall herself did not know. As regards my own affairs, says Mr. Myers, I have not thought it worth while to cite *in extenso* such statements as might possibly have been got up beforehand; since Mrs. Piper of course know that I should be one of her sitters. Such facts as that I once had an aunt, 'Cordelia Marshall, more commonly called Corrie,' might have been learnt,—though I do not think that they were learnt,—from printed or other sources. But I do not think that any larger proportion of such accessible facts was given to me than to an average sitter, previously unknown; nor were there any of those subtler points which could so easily have been made by dint of scrutiny of my books or papers. On the other hand, in my case, as in the case of several other sitters, there were messages purporting to come from a friend who has been dead many years, and mentioning circumstances which I believe that it would



have been quite impossible for Mrs. Piper to have discovered.

"I am also acquainted with some of the facts given to other sitters, and suppressed as too intimate, or as involving secrets not the property of the sitter alone. I may say that so far as my own personal conviction goes, the utterance of one or two of these facts is even more conclusive of supernormal knowledge than the correct statement of dozens of names of relations, etc., which the sitter had no personal motive for concealing.

"On the whole, I believe that all observers, both in America and in England, who have seen enough of Mrs. Piper in both states to be able to form a judgment, will agree in affirming (1) that many of the facts given could not have been learnt even by a skilled detective ; (2) that to learn others of them, although possible, would have needed an expenditure of money as well as of time which it seems impossible to suppose that Mrs. Piper could have met ; and (3) that her conduct has never given any ground whatever for supposing her capable of fraud or trickery. Few persons have been so long and so carefully observed ; and she has left on all observers the impression of thorough uprightness, candour, and honesty."

## CHAPTER XIV

### PROFESSOR WILLIAM JAMES'S TESTIMONY TO MRS. PIPER

**A**LTHOUGH Mrs. Piper was brought by the Society to England in the autumn of 1889, she was of course known to members of the Society in America before then, and, so far as we were concerned, may be said to have been "discovered" by Professor William James in 1885. His early experience of her sittings, and his testimony as to the way in which his initial scepticism was broken down, are very interesting ; and

I shall here make a few quotations from a short paper of his which was included in the *Proceedings* of the Society along with my first Report of the Piper Case.

#### PROFESSOR WILLIAM JAMES'S STATEMENT

" I made Mrs. Piper's acquaintance in the autumn of 1885. My wife's mother, Mrs. Gibbens, had been told of her by a friend, during the previous summer, and, never having seen a medium before, had paid her a visit out of curiosity. She returned with the statement that Mrs. P. had given her a long string of names of members of the family, mostly Christian names, together with facts about the persons mentioned and their relations to each other, the knowledge of which on her part was incomprehensible without supernormal powers. My sister-in-law went the next day, with still better results, as she related them. Amongst other things, the medium had accurately described the circumstances of the writer of a letter which she held against her forehead, after Miss G. had given it to her. The letter was in Italian, and its writer was known to but two persons in this country.

" I may add that on a later occasion my wife and I took another letter from this same person to Mrs. P., who went on to speak of him in a way which identified him unmistakably again. On a third occasion, two years later, my sister-in-law and I being again with Mrs. P., she reverted in her trance to these letters, and then gave us the writer's name, which she said she had not been able to get on the former occasion.

" But to revert to the beginning. I remember playing the *esprit fort* on that occasion before my feminine relatives, and seeking to explain by simple considerations the marvellous character of the facts which they brought back. This did not, however, prevent me from going myself a few days later, in company with my wife, to get a direct personal impression. The names of none of us up to this meeting had

been announced to Mrs. P. ; and Mrs. J. and I were, of course, careful to make no reference to our relatives who had preceded. The medium, however, when entranced, repeated most of the names of 'spirits' whom she had announced on the two former occasions, and added others. The names came with difficulty, and were only gradually made perfect. My wife's father's name of Gibbens was announced first as Niblin, then as Giblin. A child Herman (whom we had lost the previous year) had his name spelt out as Herrin. I think that in no case were both Christian and surnames given on this visit. But the *facts predicated* of the persons named made it in many instances impossible not to recognise the particular individuals who were talked about. We took particular pains on this occasion to give the Phinuit control no help over his difficulties and to ask no leading questions. In the light of subsequent experience I believe this not to be the best policy. For it often happens, if you give this trance-personage a name or some small fact for the lack of which he is brought to a standstill, that he will then start off with a copious flow of additional talk, containing in itself an abundance of 'tests.'

"My impression after this first visit was, that Mrs. P. was either possessed of supernormal powers, or knew the members of my wife's family by sight and had by some lucky coincidence become acquainted with such a multitude of their domestic circumstances as to produce the startling impression which she did. My later knowledge of her sittings and personal acquaintance with her has led me absolutely to reject the latter explanation, and to believe that she has supernormal powers.

"I also made during this winter an attempt to see whether Mrs. Piper's medium-trance had any community of nature with ordinary hypnotic trance.

"My first two attempts to hypnotise her were unsuccessful. Between the second time and the third, I suggested to her 'control' in the medium-trance that he should make her a mesmeric subject for me. He

agreed. (A suggestion of this sort made by the operator in one *hypnotic* trance would probably have some effect on the next.) She became partially hypnotised on the third trial ; but the effect was so slight that I ascribe it rather to the effect of repetition than to the suggestion made. By the fifth trial she had become a pretty good hypnotic subject, as far as muscular phenomena and automatic imitations of speech and gesture go ; but I could not affect her consciousness, or otherwise get her beyond this point. Her condition in this semi-hypnosis is very different from her medium-trance. The latter is characterised by great muscular unrest, even her ears moving vigorously in a way impossible to her in her waking state. But in hypnosis her muscular relaxation and weakness are extreme. She often makes several efforts to speak ere her voice becomes audible ; and to get a strong contraction of the hand, for example, express manipulation and suggestion must be practised. The automatic imitations I spoke of are in the first instance very weak, and only become strong after repetition. Her pupils contract in the medium-trance. Suggestions to the 'control' that he should make her recollect after the medium-trance what she had been saying were accepted, but had no result. In the hypnotic-trance such a suggestion will often make the patient remember all that has happened.

" No sign of thought-transference—as tested by card and diagram guessing—has been found in her, either in the hypnotic condition just described, or immediately after it ; although her 'control' in the medium-trance has said that he would bring them about. So far as tried (only twice), no right guessing of cards in the medium-trance. No clear signs of thought-transference, as tested by the naming of cards during the waking state. Trials of the 'willing game,' and attempts at automatic writing, gave similarly negative results. So far as the evidence goes, then, her medium-trance seems an isolated feature in her psychology. This would of itself be an important result if it could be established and generalised, but the record is obviously too imperfect

for confident conclusions to be drawn from it in any direction.

"Here I dropped my inquiries into Mrs. Piper's mediumship for a period of about two years, having satisfied myself that there was a genuine mystery there, but being over-freighted with time-consuming duties, and feeling that any adequate circumnavigation of the phenomena would be too protracted a task for me to aspire just then to undertake. I saw her once, half-accidentally, however, during that interval, and in the spring of 1889 saw her four times again. In the fall of 1889 she paid us a visit of a week at our country house in New Hampshire, and I then learned to know her personally better than ever before, and had confirmed in me the belief that she is an absolutely simple and genuine person. No one, when challenged, can give 'evidence' to others for such beliefs as this. Yet we all live by them from day to day, and practically I should be willing now to stake as much money on Mrs. Piper's honesty as on that of anyone I know, and am quite satisfied to leave my reputation for wisdom or folly, so far as human nature is concerned, to stand or fall by this declaration.

"And I repeat again what I said before, that, taking everything that I know of Mrs. P. into account, the result is to make me feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact in the world that she knows things in her trances which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state, and that the definite philosophy of her trances is yet to be found. The limitations of her trance-information, its discontinuity and fitfulness, and its apparent inability to develop beyond a certain point, although they end by rousing one's moral and human impatience with the phenomenon, yet are, from a scientific point of view, amongst its most interesting peculiarities, since where there are limits there are conditions, and the discovery of these is always the beginning of explanation."

The most recent utterance of Professor William James

on the subject is published in the *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. for June 1909 (Part LVIII.), and it contains an account of conversations carried on through Mrs. Piper since Dr. Hodgson's death with what purported to be Dr. Hodgson's surviving personality—together with Professor James's critical comments thereupon.

I may here quote a very small initial portion of this voluminous Report. It is very likely a mistake to quote the early and therefore more difficult stages of a re-appearance, instead of a more finished and practised example such as comes at a later date; and yet there is an interest in the first effort and stumblings—if they are intelligently read—and in several respects they may be considered instructive.

Richard Hodgson died suddenly upon December 20th, 1905. On December 28th a message purporting to come from him was delivered in a trance of Mrs. Piper's, and she has hardly held a sitting since then without some manifestation of what professed to be Hodgson's spirit taking place. Hodgson had often during his lifetime laughingly said that if he ever passed over and Mrs. Piper was still officiating here below, he would control her better than she had ever yet been controlled in her trances, because he was so thoroughly familiar with the difficulties and conditions on this side. I had myself had no sitting with Mrs. Piper and had hardly seen her for some nine years, but for most of that time I had been kept informed of what was going on by reading the typed records, furnished me by my friend Hodgson, of all the trances of which report was taken, and for which the sitters had not asked secrecy to be observed. The "Control" most frequently in evidence in these years has been the personage calling himself "Rector." Dr. Hodgson was disposed to admit the claim to reality of Rector and of the whole Imperator-Band of which he is a member, while I have rather favoured the idea of their all being dream-creations of Mrs. Piper, probably having no existence except when she is in trance, but consolidated by repetition into personalities consistent enough to play their several rôles.

Such at least is the dramatic impression which my acquaintance with the sittings has left on my mind. I can see no contradiction between Rector's being on the one hand an improvised creature of this sort, and his being on the other hand the extraordinarily impressive personality which he unquestionably is. He has marvellous discernment of the inner states of the sitters whom he addresses, and speaks straight to their troubles as if he knew them all in advance. He addresses you as if he were the most devoted of your friends. He appears like an aged and, when he speaks instead of writing, like a somewhat hollow-voiced clergyman, a little weary of his experience of the world, endlessly patient and sympathetic, and desiring to put all his tenderness and wisdom at your service while you are there. Critical and fastidious sitters have recognised his wisdom, and confess their debt to him as a moral adviser. With all due respect to Mrs. Piper, I feel very sure that her own waking capacity for being a spiritual adviser, if it were compared with Rector's, would fall greatly behind.

As I conceive the matter, it is on this mass of secondary and automatic personality of which of late years Rector has been the centre, and which forms the steady background of Mrs. Piper's trances, that the supernormal knowledge which she unquestionably displays is flashed. Flashed, grafted, inserted—use what word you will—the trance-automatism is at any rate the intermediating condition, the supernormal knowledge comes as if from beyond, and the automatism uses its own forms in delivering it to the sitter. The most habitual form is to say that it comes from the spirit of a departed friend. The earliest messages from "Hodgson" have been communicated by "Rector," but he soon spoke in his own name, and the only question which I shall consider in this paper is this: *Are there any unmistakable indications in the messages in question that something that we may call the "spirit" of Hodgson was probably really there?* We need not refine yet upon what the word "spirit" means and on what spirits are and can do.

We can leave the meaning of the word provisionally very indeterminate,—the vague popular notion of what a spirit is is enough to begin with.

The spirit-Hodgson's first manifestation was, as I have said, eight days after his death. There was something dramatically so like him in the utterances of those earliest days, gradually gathering "strength" as they did, that those who had cogniance of them were much impressed. I will begin by a short account of these earliest appearances, of which the first was at Miss Theodate Pope's<sup>1</sup> sitting on Dec. 28th, 1905. At this sitting Rector had been writing, when the hand dropped the pencil and worked convulsively several seconds in a very excited manner.

Miss P. What is the matter ?

[The hand, shaking with apparently great excitement, wrote the letter H, . . . bearing down so hard on the paper that the point of the pencil was broken. It then wrote "Hodgson."]

Miss P. God bless you !

[The hand writes "I am"—followed by rapid scrawls, as if regulator of machine were out of order.]

Miss P. Is this my friend ?

[Hand assents by knocking five times on paper-pad.]  
(RECTOR.) Peace, friends, he is here, it was he, but he could not remain, he was so choked. He is doing all in his power to return . . . Better wait for a few moments until he breathes freer again.

Miss P. I will.

(R.) Presently he will be able to conduct all here.

Miss P. That is good news.

(R.) Listen. Everything is for the best. He holds in his hand a ring. . . . He is showing it to you. Cannot you see it, friend ?

Miss P. I cannot see it. Have him tell me about it.

(R.) Do you understand what it means ?

Miss P. I know he had a very attractive ring.

(R.) Margaret.

"All" was then written, with a "B" after it, and Miss P. asked "what is that ?" "A," "B" and "L" followed, but no explanation. [The explanation was given later.]

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Pope was subsequently a passenger nearly drowned on the *Lusitania*.



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The above is the whole of the direct matter from Hodgson at this, the first of the sittings at which he has appeared.

[For the sequel to this ring-episode, see the report itself in *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xxiii.]

At Miss Pope's next sitting (five days later), after some talk about him from Rector, R. H. appeared for the second time, and in the character, familiar to him, of being a well-spring of poetical lore. Mrs. Piper's hand cramped most awkwardly, first dropped and then broke the pencil. A new one being given, the hand wrote as follows :—

Richard Hodgson I am well happy.  
Glad I came. God bless Pope.

Miss POPE. Many thanks. [Then the hand wrote :—]

It lies not in her form or face  
Tho these are passing fair,  
Nor in the woman's tone of grace,  
Nor in her falling hair ;  
It lies not in those wondrous eyes  
That swiftly light and shine,  
Tho all the stars of all the skies  
Than these are less divine.

I am only practicing.

Miss P. Who wrote it ?

(RECTOR.) Richard only.

Miss P. When ?

Now.

Miss P. Doesn't it exist on paper in our world ?

No.

Miss P. Did you really make that up ?

Yes.

Miss P. Well, you are clever.

If you ever find this in your world, never believe in this world !

Miss P. I shall look for it, you may be sure.

Good ! Think I'm asleep ? Not much ! My head.

I must leave you now.

(RECTOR.) It is impossible for us to hold him—that is all.

Miss P. Rector, did he dictate that poem to you ? . . . Do you think he made it up ?

(RECTOR.) I do positively know he did . . . Farewell !

At the second sitting after this (Jan. 8th, 1906), Miss Pope again being the sitter, R. H. appeared again, writing as follows :

I am Hodgson . . . I heard your call—I know you—you are Miss Pope. Piper instrument. I am happy exceedingly difficult to come very. I understand why Myers came seldom. I must leave. I cannot stay. I cannot remain to-day. . . .

On Jan. 23rd, 1906, Mrs. Wm. James, and W. James, Jr., had a sitting at which R. H. used the medium's voice and gave a very life-like impression of his presence. The record runs as follows :

Why, there's Billy! Is that Mrs. James and Billy? God bless you! Well, well, well, this is good! [Laughs.] I am in the witness-box [Laughs.] I have found my way, I am here, have patience with me? All is well with me. Don't miss me. Where's William? Give him my love and tell him I shall certainly live to prove all I know. Do you hear me? see me? I am not strong, but have patience with me. I will tell you all. I think I can reach you. Something on my mind. I want Lodge to know everything. I have seen Myers. I must rest.

[After an interval he comes in again :—]

Billy, where is Billy? What are you writing Billy? Are you having any sports? Would you like to take a swim? [R. H.'s chief association with W. J. Jr., had been when fishing or swimming in Chocorua Lake.] Well, come on! Get a good deal of exercise, but don't overdo it! Perhaps I swam too much. [He undoubtedly had done so.]—I learned my lesson, but I'm just where I wanted to be.

Do you play ball?—tennis? Men will theorize—let them do so! I have found out the truth. I said that if I could get over there I would not make a botch of it. If ever R. H. lived in the body, he is talking now. . . . William [James] is too dogmatic. . . . I want George [Dorr] to extricate all those papers and set those marked "private" aside. This has been on my mind. George is to be trusted absolutely with all sincerity and faith. There are some private records which I should not wish to have handled. Let George [Dorr] and Piddington go through them and return them to the sitters. The

cipher! I made that cipher, and no one living can read it. [Correct.] I shall explain it later. Let Harry [James] and George keep them till then. [They had been appointed administrators of his estate, a fact probably known to Mrs. Piper.] This is the best I have been able to do yet. I spoke with Miss Pope, but this is the best. Remember, every communication *must* have the human element. I understand better now why I had so little from Myers. [To W. J., Jr.] What discourages you about your art? [W. J., Jr., was studying painting.] Oh what good times we had, fishing! Believe, Billy, wherever you go, whatever you do, there is a God.

So much for Hodgson's first appearances, which were characteristic enough in manner, however incomplete.

Mr. G. B. Dorr of Boston had later sittings with Mrs. Piper, at which he encouraged Hodgson to give all sorts of reminiscences, as evidence of survival of memory, and as tending towards proof of identity. I only quote a small portion from the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research, vol. xxiii., page 44, selecting a portion which contains true reminiscences; and adding Mr. Dorr's annotations, without which to us in England they would be useless. The remarks at the end are quoted from the Report by William James in *Proceedings* S.P.R., vol. xxiii.

I recall the pansies your mother used to place over the table. I remember that well—delightful to see them! I can see them now.

[My mother used to have pansies spread loosely over the table-cloth, when she had people to dine or sup with us at Bar Harbor, where we had a large bed of them planted near the house so that we could get them freely for this purpose. The custom is not common enough to let H.'s statement pass for a happy guess, nor do I think it likely he would have spoken of it to Mrs. Piper, either awake or in trance. It came out quite suddenly also, and with a positiveness which made me feel that it was a true recollection, something seen at the moment in a mental picture.—D.]

I remember a beautiful road, a bicycle-road you made, going through the woods.

[A dozen years ago I made a bicycle-road on my own backland, which ran through the woods beneath a mountain over which we often used to walk. It was a pleasant and familiar feature in our summer life there, and it would naturally be one of the pictures that would come back to R. H. in thinking of the place,—like the view from my mother's balcony of which he spoke at the former sitting. But it is not a thing of which either he or I would have spoken to Mrs. Piper, whether in trance or awake.—D.]

G. B. D. then tries again to get the name of the man who occupied the farmhouse, describing him to R. H. without mentioning his name.

Oh yes, I remember him well—I remember going off with him once fishing—going down the shore in a boat. . . . I remember one evening, and it impressed me so vividly because your mother did not like it, and I felt we had done wrong and hurt her—M. and I were smoking together and we talked too late, and she felt it was time to retire—

[This would be remarkably good if the incident should prove not to have come up already in R. H.'s own sittings after M. died. She used to smoke cigarettes occasionally, and was the only person of the feminine sex whom I now recall as having done so at our house. Unless in possibly referring to this incident to her 'spirit' at trances, after M. died, Hodgson would have been most unlikely to speak of it to others,—certainly not to Mrs. Piper, either in trance or awake.—D.]

G. B. D. Do you remember where you went with John Rich when you went fishing with him—Oh I forgot! I did not mean to give you his name!

John Rich, John, that is his name! But I am sorry you gave it to me too—it might have come to me. We got a boat and went over to an island. Coming back we had some difficulty in getting our fish in. We had poor luck in catching them, and then we lost them. Ask him, he will remember it, I think.

[R. H.'s recollection of going off with Rich seems to be good, as I think it over. That he should go off with Rich only and neither alone nor with me or other guests, is exactly what happened,—and yet not what might have been expected to happen. His going to an island is descriptive also.—D.]

Do you remember what you used to put over your back that had a cup in it? And there was a little brook where we used to stop and drink. And then I used to stop and light my pipe—the whole scene is as vivid to me! If I could only express it to you!

[I used to carry a little canvas bag slung over my shoulder and a cup in it, when we went on long tramps. This may be what R. H. refers to, though I think that he was rather apt to carry a folding leather cup of his own in his pocket. The whole recollection is rather vague in my memory, going back a number of years. The picture is a good one of just what used to happen when we were off on our tramps together, though of course what he describes would be always apt to happen on walks through woods and over mountains. The picture of the little brook we used to stop and drink at is good—I can see it now.—D.]

After some talk about the Tavern Club, about Australia, and about the state of things in the other world, R. H. goes on as follows:—

Do you remember one summer there was a gentleman at your house who had a violin. I had some interesting talks with him about these things, and I liked to hear him play his violin. A little gentleman—I remember him very well.

[This describes a man named von G., who was an excellent violinist and who also talked interestingly on psychical research matters, in which he professed to have some faculty. As R. H. himself was also fond of the violin, it seems natural that some memory of von G. should stand out now. That Mrs. Piper should have any knowledge of this gentleman seems most improbable.—D.]

My earthly memories come only in fragments. I remember quite well this little gentleman and how interested I was in talking with him about psychics, and in his instrument as well. I remember a man Royce visiting you.

[Prof. Royce says that he has been at Oldfarm along with Hodgson, but adds that that might be a natural association in Mrs. Piper's mind, since he thinks that the only time he ever saw her was at the Dorrs' in Boston.—W. J.]

This is, I think, the whole of the matter relative to

Oldfarm which the R. H.-Control has given. The number of items mentioned is not great, and some inability to answer questions appears. But there are almost no mistakes of fact, and it is hardly possible that all the veridical points should have been known to Mrs. Piper normally. Some of them indeed were likely *a priori*; others may have been chance-hits; but for the mass, it seems to me that either reading of Mr. Dorri's mind, or spirit-return, is the least improbable explanation.

The fewness of the items may seem strange to some critics. But if we assume a spirit to be actually there, trying to reach us, and if at the same time we imagine that his situation with regard to the transaction is similar to our own, the surprise vanishes. I have been struck over and over again, both when at sittings myself and when reading the records, at the paralyzing effect on one's ready wit and conversational flow, which the strangeness of the conditions brings with it. Constraint and numbness take the place of genial expansiveness. We "don't know what to say," and it may also be so "on the other side." Few persons, I fancy, if suddenly challenged to prove their identity through the telephone, would quickly produce a large number of facts appropriate to the purpose. They would be more perplexed, and waste more time than they imagine.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE AUTHOR'S FIRST REPORT ON MRS. PIPER

MY own first Report on this case appeared in 1890, soon after the close of Mrs. Piper's first visit to England, and it ran as follows :—

#### ACCOUNT OF SITTINGS WITH MRS. PIPER

##### *Formal Report*

At the request of Mr. Myers I undertook a share in the investigation of a case of apparent clairvoyance.

It is the case of a lady who appears to go off into a trance when she pleases to will it under favourable surroundings, and in that trance to talk volubly, with a manner and voice quite different from her ordinary manner and voice, on details concerning which she has had no information given her.

In this abnormal state her speech has reference mainly to people's relatives and friends, living or deceased, about whom she is able to hold a conversation, and with whom she appears more or less familiar.

By introducing anonymous strangers, and by catechising her myself in various ways, I have satisfied myself that much of the information she possesses in the trance state is not acquired by ordinary commonplace methods, but that she has some unusual means of acquiring information. The facts on which she discourses are usually within the knowledge of some person present, though they are often entirely out of his conscious thought at the time. Occasionally facts have been narrated which have only been verified afterwards, and which are in good faith asserted never to have been known; meaning thereby that they have left no trace on the conscious memory of any person present or in the neighbourhood, and that it is highly improbable that they were ever known to such persons.

She is also in the trance state able to diagnose diseases, and to specify the owners or late owners of portable property, under circumstances which preclude the application of ordinary methods.

In the midst of this lucidity a number of mistaken and confused statements are frequently made, having little or no apparent meaning or application.

Concerning the particular means by which she acquires the different kinds of information, there is no sufficient evidence to make it safe to draw any conclusion. I can only say with certainty that it is by none of the ordinary methods known to Physical Science.

OLIVER J. LODGE

*May, 1890*

In order to gain experience, my wife had invited Mrs. Piper to our house in Liverpool between the dates December 18th and December 27th, 1889; and again between the dates January 30th and February 5th, 1890, when she sailed for New York.

During these days we had twenty-two sittings, and I devoted my whole time to the business, being desirous of making the investigation as complete and satisfactory as possible while the opportunity lasted.

Mrs. Piper pretends to no knowledge as to her own powers, and I believe her assertion that she is absolutely ignorant of what she has said in the trance state. She appears to be anxious to get the phenomenon elucidated, and hopes by sitting to scientific investigators to have light thrown on her abnormal condition, about which she expresses herself as not quite comfortable. She perfectly appreciates the reasonableness of withholding information; assents with a smile to a sudden stop in the middle of a sentence during conversation, and in general is quite uninquisitive. All this innocency may, of course, be taken as perfection of acting, but it deprives her of the great advantage (assuming fraudulent intention for the moment) of controlling the circumstances after the manner of a conjurer; and prevents her from being the master of her own time and movements. The control of the experiments was thus entirely in my own hands, and this is an essential ingredient for satisfactory testimony.

The initial question to be satisfactorily answered, before anything can be held worth either investigating or recording, concerns the honesty of Mrs. Piper herself.

That there is more than can be explained by any amount of either conscious or unconscious fraud—that the phenomenon is a genuine one, however it is to be explained—I now regard as absolutely certain; and I make the following two statements with the utmost confidence :—

- (i.) Mrs. Piper's attitude is not one of deception.



(ii.) No conceivable deception on the part of Mrs. Piper can explain the facts.

[I went on to enumerate eight possibilities of imposture against which we were on our guard : but matters have advanced far beyond that now, and it is useless to dwell upon this discarded part of the subject.]

Cheating being eliminated, and something which may briefly be described as a duplex or trance personality being conceded, the next hypothesis is that her trance personality makes use of information acquired by her in her waking state, and retails what it finds in her sub-consciousness without any ordinary effort of memory.

It is an interesting question whether any facts instilled into the waking Mrs. Piper can be recognised in the subsequent trance speech. My impression at one time was that the trance information is practically independent of what specific facts Mrs. Piper may happen to know. The evidence now seems to me about evenly balanced on either side. Whether the trance speech could give, say, scientific facts, or a foreign language, or anything in its nature entirely beyond her ken, I am unable to say. [Further information on these points is now accessible, but not anything finally conclusive. It appears that unknown details and incidents can certainly be obtained, but hardly information on some alien and recondite subject,—at least without great difficulty.] So far as my present experience has gone, I do not feel sure how far Mrs. Piper's knowledge or ignorance of specific facts has an appreciable influence on the communications of her trance personality. But certainly the great mass of facts retailed by this personality are wholly outside of Mrs. Piper's knowledge ; in detail, though not in kind.

The personality active and speaking in the trance is apparently so distinct from the personality of Mrs. Piper that it is permissible and convenient to call it by another name. It does not differ from her as Hyde did from Jekyll, by being a personification of the vicious portion

of the same individual. There is no special contrast, any more than there is any special similarity. It strikes one as a different personality altogether; and the name by which it introduces itself when asked, viz., "Dr. Phinuit" is as convenient as any other, and can be used wholly irrespective of hypothesis.

I would not, in using this name, be understood as thereby committing myself to any hypothesis regarding the nature of this apparently distinct and individual mind. At the same time the name is useful as expressing compactly what is naturally prominent to the feeling of any sitter, that he is not talking to Mrs. Piper at all. The manner, mode of thought, tone, trains of idea, are all different. You are speaking no longer to a lady, but to a man, an old man, a medical man. All this cannot but be vividly felt even by one who considered the impersonation a consummate piece of acting.

Whether such a man as Dr. Phinuit ever existed I do not know, nor from the evidential point of view do I greatly care. It will be interesting to have the fact ascertained if possible; but I cannot see that it will much affect the question of genuineness. For that he did not ever exist is a thing practically impossible to prove. While, if he did exist, it can be easily supposed that Mrs. Piper took care enough that her impersonation should have so much rational basis.

Proceeding now on the assumption that I may speak henceforth of Dr. Phinuit as of a genuine individual intelligence, whether it be a usually latent portion of Mrs. Piper's intelligence, or whether it be something distinct from her mind and the education to which it has been subjected, I go on to consider the hypotheses which still remain unexamined.

And first we have the hypothesis of fishery on the part of Dr. Phinuit, as distinguished from trickery on the part of Mrs. Piper. I mean a system of ingenious fishing: the utilisation of trivial indications, of every intimation—audible, tactile, muscular—and of little shades of manner too indefinable to name; all these, excited in the sitter by skilful guesses and well-directed

shots, and their nutriment extracted with superhuman cunning.

Now this hypothesis is not one to be lightly regarded, or ever wholly set aside. I regard it as, to a certain extent, a *vera causa*. At times Dr. Phinuit does fish; occasionally he guesses; and sometimes he ekes out the scantiness of his information from the resources of a lively imagination.

Whenever his supply of information is abundant there is no sign of the fishing process.

At other times it is as if he were in a difficult position,—only able to gain information from very indistinct or inaudible sources, and yet wishful to convey as much information as possible. The attitude is then as of one straining after every clue, and making use of the slightest indication, whether received in normal or abnormal ways; not indeed obviously distinguishing between information received from the sitter and information received from other sources.

I am familiar with muscle-reading and other simulated "thought-transference" methods, and prefer to avoid contact whenever it is possible to get rid of it without too much fuss. Although Mrs. Piper always held somebody's hand while preparing to go into the trance, she did not always continue to hold it when speaking as Phinuit. She did usually hold the hand of the person she was speaking to, but was often satisfied for a time with some other person's, sometimes talking right across a room to and about a stranger, but preferring them to come near. On several occasions she let go of everybody, for half-hours together, especially when fluent and kept well supplied with "relics."

I have now to assert with entire confidence that, pressing the ingenious-guessing and unconscious-indication hypothesis to its utmost limit, it can only be held to account for a very few of Dr. Phinuit's statements.

It cannot in all cases be held to account for medical diagnosis, afterwards confirmed by the regular practitioner. It cannot account for minute and full details of names, circumstances, and events, given to a cautious

and almost silent sitter, sometimes without contact. And, to take the strongest case at once, it cannot account for the narration of facts outside the conscious knowledge of the sitter or of any person present.

Rejecting the fishery hypothesis, then, as insufficient to account for many of the facts, we are driven to the only remaining *known* cause in order to account for them:—viz., thought-transference, or the action of mind on mind independently of the ordinary channels of communication.

I regard the fact of genuine "thought-transference" between persons in immediate proximity (not necessarily in contact) as having been established by direct and simple experiment; and, except by reason of paucity of instance, I consider it as firmly grounded as any of the less familiar facts of nature such as one deals with in a laboratory. I speak of it therefore as a known cause, *i.e.*, one to which there need be no hesitation in appealing in order to explain facts which without it would be inexplicable.

The Phinuit facts are most of them of this nature, and I do not hesitate to assert confidently that *thought-transference is the most commonplace explanation to which it is possible to appeal.*

I regard it as having been rigorously proved before, and as therefore requiring no fresh bolstering up; but to the many who have not made experiments on the subject, and are therefore naturally sceptical concerning even thought-transference, the record of the Phinuit sittings will afford, I think, a secure basis for faith in this immaterial mode of communication,—this apparently direct action of mind on mind.

But, whereas the kind of thought-transference which had been to my own knowledge experimentally proved was a hazy and difficult recognition by one person of objects kept as vividly as possible in the consciousness of another person, the kind of thought-transference necessary to explain these sittings is of an altogether freer and higher order,—a kind which has not yet been experimentally proved at all. Facts are related which

are not in the least present to the consciousness of the sitter, and they are often detailed glibly and vividly without delay ; in very different style from the tedious and hesitating dinness of the percipients in the old thought-transference experiments.

But that is natural enough, when we consider that the percipient in those experiments had to preserve a mind as vacant as possible. For no process of inducing mental vacancy can be so perfect as that of going into a trance, whether hypnotic or other. Moreover, although it was considered desirable to maintain the object contemplated in the consciousness of the agent, a shrewd suspicion was even then entertained that the sub-conscious part of the agent's mind might be perhaps equally effective.

Hence one is at liberty to apply to these Phinuit records the hypothesis of thought-transference in its most developed state : vacuity on the part of the percipient, sub-conscious activity on the part of the sitter.

In this form one feels that much can be explained. If Dr. Phinuit tells a stranger how many children, or brothers, or sisters he has, and their names ; the names of father and mother and grandmother, of cousins and of aunts ; if he brings appropriate and characteristic messages from well-known relatives deceased ; all this is explicable on the hypothesis of free and easy thought-transference from the sub-consciousness of the sitter to the sensitive medium of the trance personality.<sup>1</sup>

So strongly was I impressed with this view that after

<sup>1</sup> For instance, in the course of my interviews, all my six brothers (adult and scattered) and one sister living were correctly named (two with some help), and the existence of the one deceased was mentioned. My father and his father were likewise named, with several uncles and aunts. My wife's father and stepfather, both deceased, were named in full, both Christian and surname, with full identifying detail. I only quote these as examples ; it is quite unnecessary as well as unwise to attach any evidential weight to statements of this sort made during a sojourn in one's house.

some half-dozen sittings I ceased to feel much interest in being told things, however minute, obscure, and inaccessible they might be, so long as they were, or had been, within the knowledge either of myself or of the sitter for the time being.

At the same time it ought to be constantly borne in mind that this kind of thought-transference, without consciously active agency, has never been experimentally proved. Certain facts not otherwise apparently explicable, such as those chronicled in *Phantasms of the Living*, have suggested it, but it is really only a possible hypothesis to which appeal has been made whenever any other explanation seems out of the question. But until it is actually established by experiment, in the same way that conscious mind action has been established, it cannot be regarded as either safe or satisfactory; and in pursuing it we may be turning our backs on some truer but as yet perhaps unsuggested clue. I feel as if this caution were necessary for myself as well as for other investigators.

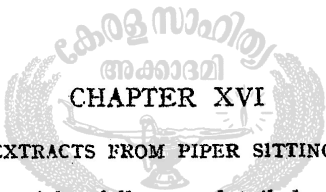
On reading the record it will be apparent that while "Phinuit" frequently speaks in his own person, relating things which he himself discovers by what I suppose we must call ostensible clairvoyance, sometimes he represents himself as in communication—not always quite easy and distinct communication, especially at first, but in communication—with one's relatives and friends who have departed this life.

The messages and communications from these persons are usually given through Phinuit as a reporter. And he reports sometimes in the third person, sometimes in the first. Occasionally, but very seldom, Phinuit seems to give up his place altogether to the other personality, friend or relative, who then communicates with something of his old manner and individuality; becoming often impressive and realistic.

This last I say is rare, but with one or two personages it occurs, subject to reservations to be mentioned directly; and when it does, Phinuit does not appear to know what has been said. It is quite as if he in his turn

evacuated the body, just as Mrs. Piper had done, while a third personality utilises it for a time. The voice and mode of address are once more changed, and more or less recall the voice and manner of the person represented as communicating.

The communications thus obtained, though they show traces of the individuality of the person represented as speaking, are frequently vulgarised ; and the speeches are more commonplace, and so to say " cheaper," than what one would suppose likely from the person himself. It can, of course, be suggested that the necessity of working through the brain of a person not exceptionally educated may easily be supposed capable of dulling the edge of refinement, and of rendering messages on abstruse subjects impossible.



## CHAPTER XVI

### EXTRACTS FROM PIPER SITTINGS

AND now might follow a detailed report of the sittings which at that date (1889-1890) I held with Mrs. Piper in my house at Liverpool, all of which were taken down very fully ; some of them verbatim by a stenographer introduced on those occasions. For in those days communication was conducted entirely by the voice ; writing being quite exceptional, and limited to a few words occasionally. Whereas in more recent years communication is for the most part conducted by writing only, and the need for stenography has practically ceased.

My detailed report appears in the *Proceedings* of the Society, vol. vi., but it occupies a great deal of space, and would be merely tiresome if reproduced in any quantity. Accordingly I propose to make only a few extracts, quoting those incidents which demonstrate one or other of the following powers ; or which illustrate

by way of example the general character of the sittings at that time,—regarded rather from the dramatic than from the evidential point of view.

The powers just referred to are the following :—

- (1) The perception of trivial events simultaneously occurring at a distance.
- (2) The reading of letters by other than normal means.
- (3) The recognition of objects and assignment of them to their respective owners.
- (4) Perception of small and intimate family details in the case of complete strangers.
- (5) The statement of facts unknown at the time to any person present ;
- (6) With perhaps a supplement illustrating apparent ignorance of some facts within Mrs. Piper's normal knowledge, and likewise—what are frequent—instances of erroneous statement concerning facts which are well-known to, and in the mind of, the sitter.

Among sitters, I may mention Dr. Gerald Rendall, late of Trinity College, Cambridge, then Principal of University College, Liverpool. He was introduced as Mr. Roberts, and a sitting was immediately commenced. The names of his brothers were all given correctly at this or at the evening sitting of the same day, with many specific details which were correct.

He brought with him a locket, and received communications and reminiscences purporting to come from the deceased friend whom it commemorated, some of them at present incompletely verified by reason of absence of persons in America, some of them apparently incorrect, but those facts which he knew correctly stated in such a way as to satisfy him that chance guessing and all other commonplace surmises were absurdly out of the question.

Another sitter was Prof. E. C. K. Gonner, then Lecturer on Economics at University College, Liverpool,



introduced as Mr. McCunn, another colleague with whom therefore he might on a fraudulent hypothesis be confused. He brought a book belonging to his mother, still living in London, and had many correct details concerning her family and surroundings related to him.

Many of his own family were also mentioned ; but, whether because of the book or otherwise, his mother's influence seemed more powerful than his own ; and, several times, relatives, though otherwise spoken of correctly, were mentioned in terms of their relationship to the elder generation. Phinuit, however, seemed conscious of these mistakes and several times corrected himself ; as for instance : ' Your brother William—no I mean your uncle, her brother.'

This Uncle William was a good instance. He had died before Prof. Gonner was born, but he had been his mother's eldest brother, and his sudden death had been a great shock to her—one in fact from which she was a long time recovering. Phinuit described him as having been killed with a hole in his head, like a shot hole, and yet not a shot, more like a blow :—the fact being that he met his death in a Yorkshire election riot, a stone striking him on the head.

Speaking of deaths, I may also mention the case of my wife's father, who died when she was a fortnight old in a dramatic and pathetic fashion. Phinuit described the circumstances of his death rather vividly. The cause of death of her stepfather also, which was perfectly definite, was also precisely grasped. The fall of her own father down the hold of his ship and his consequent leg-pain were clearly stated. My wife was present on these occasions, and of course had been told of all these family incidents, and remembered them.

As an instance of reading a letter, which had indeed just passed through my mind, but which was not read in any normal manner by the medium, I take the following case.

(A chain was handed to Phinuit by me, the package

having been delivered by hand to me late the previous evening. I had just opened the package, glanced at the contents, and hastily read a letter inside, then wrapped all up again and stored them. The chain had been sent by Mrs. John Watson from Sefton Drive; it had belonged to "Ian Maclaren's" father.)

"This belongs to an old gentlemen that passed out of the body—a nice old man. I see something funny here, something the matter with heart, paralytic something. Give me the wrappers, all of them." [*i.e.*, The paper it came in; a letter among them. Medium held them to top of her head, gradually flicking away the blank ones. She did not inspect them. She was all the while holding with her other hand another stranger, a Mr. Lund, who knew nothing whatever about the letter or the chain.]

"Who's dear Lodge? Who's Poole, Toodle, Poodle? What-ever does that mean?"

O. J. L. : "I haven't the least idea."

"Is there J. N. W. here? Poole. Then there's Sefton. S-e-f-t-o-n, Pool, hair. Yours truly, J. N. W. That's it; I send hair. Poole J. N. W. Do you understand that?"

O. J. L. : "No, only partially."

[Note by O. J. L.—I found afterwards that the letter began "Dear Dr. Lodge," contained the words "Sefton Drive," and "Cook" so written as to look like Poole. It also said "I send you some hair," and finished "yours sincerely J. B. W."; the "B" being not unlike an "N." The name of the sender was not mentioned in the letter, but at a subsequent sitting it was correctly stated by Phinuit in connexion with the chain.]

This reading of letters in an abnormal way is very curious, and is a very old type of phenomenon. Kant and Hegel were both familiar with it : only it was then called "reading with the pit of the stomach." Now it seems usually done with the top of the head.

I had a few other cases—less distinct than the above—and I again refer here to the little experiment made by Mrs. Verrall as reported on page 98, as well as to page 104.

One of the best sitters was a friend who for several years was my next-door neighbour at Liverpool, Isaac

C. Thompson, F.L.S., to whose name indeed, before he had been in any way introduced, Phinuit sent a message purporting to come from his father. Three generations of his and of his wife's family, living and dead (small and compact Quaker families), were, in the course of two or three sittings, conspicuously mentioned, with identifying detail; the main informant representing himself as his deceased brother, a young Edinburgh doctor, whose loss had been mourned some twenty years ago. The familiarity and touchingness of the messages communicated in this particular instance were very remarkable, and can by no means be reproduced in any printed report of the sitting. Their case is one in which very few mistakes were made, the detail standing out vividly correct, so that in fact they found it impossible not to believe that their relatives were actually speaking to them. This notable belief correctly represents the impression produced by a favourable series of sittings, and it is for that reason I mention it now. Simple events occurring elsewhere during the sitting were also detected by Dr. Phinuit in their case, better than in any other I know of. A full report of this rather excellent case has had to be omitted for lack of space.

There was a remarkable little incident towards the end of my series of sittings, when this friend of mine was present. A message interpolated itself to a gentleman living in Liverpool, known, but not at all intimately known, to both of us, and certainly outside of our thoughts—the head of the Liverpool Post-office, Mr. Rich. The message purported to be from a son of his who had died suddenly a few months ago, and whom I had never seen; though Isaac Thompson had, it seems, once or twice spoken to him.

“ This son addressed I. C. T. by name, and besought him to convey a message to his father, who, he said, was much stricken by the blow, and who was suffering from a recent occasional dizziness in his head, so that he felt afraid he should have to retire from business. Other

little things were mentioned of an identifying character ; and the message was, a few days later, duly conveyed. The facts stated were admitted to be accurate ; and the father, though naturally inclined to be sceptical, confessed that he had indeed been more than ordinarily troubled at the sudden death of his eldest son, because of a recent unfortunate estrangement between them which would otherwise have been only temporary.

" The only thought-transference explanation I can reasonably offer him is that it was the distant activity of his own mind, operating on the sensitive brain of the medium, of whose existence he knew absolutely nothing, and contriving to send a delusive message to itself !

" One thing about which the son seemed anxious was a certain black case which he asked us to speak to his father about, and to say he did not want lost. The father did not know what case was meant : but I have heard since, indirectly, that on his death-bed the son was calling out about a black case, though I cannot learn that the particular case has been securely identified."

Contemplating these and such-like communications, I could not help feeling that if it be really a case of thought-transference at all, it is thought-transference of a surprisingly vivid kind, the proof of which would be very valuable, supposing it were the correct explanation of the phenomenon.

But I felt doubtful if it were the correct explanation. One must not shut one's eyes to the *possibility* that in pursuing a favourite hypothesis one may after all be on the wrong tack altogether.

Every known agency must be worked to the utmost before one is willing to admit an unknown one : and indeed to abandon this last known link of causation as inadequate to sustain the growing weight of facts was an operation not to be lightly undertaken. And yet I felt grave doubts whether it would really suffice to explain the facts ; whether indeed it went any distance toward their explanation.

So I set to work to try and obtain, by the

regular process of communication which suits this particular medium, facts which were not only out of my knowledge but which never could have been in it.

In giving an account of these experiments, fully reported at the time though now some twenty years old, I must enter on a few trivial details concerning my own relations. The occasion is the excuse.

It happened that an uncle of mine in London, then quite an old man, the eldest of a surviving three out of a very large family, of which my own father was one of the youngest, had a twin brother who died some twenty or more years ago. I interested him generally in the subject, and wrote to ask if he would lend me some relic of this brother. By morning post on a certain day I received a curious old gold watch, which the deceased brother had worn and been fond of; and that same morning—no one in the house having seen it or knowing anything about it—I handed it to Mrs. Piper when in a state of trance.

I was told almost immediately that it had belonged to one of my uncles—one that had been mentioned before as having died from the effects of a fall—one that had been very fond of Uncle Robert, the name of the survivor—that the watch was now in possession of this same Uncle Robert, with whom its late owner was anxious to communicate. After some difficulty and many wrong attempts Dr. Phinuit caught the name, Jerry, short for Jeremiah, and said emphatically, as if impersonating him, "This is my watch, and Robert is my brother, and I am here. Uncle Jerry, my watch." All this at the first sitting on the very morning the watch had arrived by post, no one but myself and a shorthand clerk who happened to have been introduced for the first time at this sitting by me, and whose antecedents are well known to me, being present.

Having thus ostensibly got into communication through some means or other with what purported to be Uncle Jerry, whom I had indeed known slightly in his later years of blindness, but of whose early life I

knew nothing, I pointed out to him that to make Uncle Robert aware of his presence it would be well to recall trivial details of their boyhood, all of which I would faithfully report.

He quite caught the idea, and proceeded during several successive sittings ostensibly to instruct Dr. Phinuit to mention a number of little things such as would enable his brother to recognise him.

References to his blindness, illness, and main facts of his life were comparatively useless from my point of view; but these details of boyhood, two-thirds of a century ago, were utterly and entirely out of my ken. My father himself had only known these brothers as men.

"Uncle Jerry" recalled episodes such as swimming the creek when they were boys together, and running some risk of getting drowned; killing a cat in Smith's field; the possession of a small rifle, and of a long peculiar skin, like a snake-skin, which he thought was now in the possession of Uncle Robert.

All these facts have been more or less completely verified. But the interesting thing is that his twin brother, from whom I got the watch, and with whom I was thus in correspondence, could not remember them all. He recollected something about swimming the creek, though he himself had merely looked on. He had a distinct recollection of having had the snake-skin, and of the box in which it was kept, though he did not know where it was then. But he altogether denied killing the cat, and could not recall Smith's field.

His memory, however, was decidedly failing him, and he was good enough to write to another brother, Frank, living in Cornwall, an old sea captain, and ask if he had any better remembrance of certain facts—of course not giving any inexplicable reasons for asking. The result of this inquiry was triumphantly to vindicate the existence of Smith's field as a place near their home, where they used to play, in Barking, Essex; and the killing of a cat by another brother was also recollected; while

of the swimming of the creek, near a mill-race, full details were given, Frank and Jerry being the heroes of that foolhardy episode.

I may say here that Dr. Phinuit has a keen "scent"—shall I call it?—for trinkets or personal valuables of all kinds. He recognised a ring which my wife wears as having been given "to me for her" by a specified aunt just before her death; of which he at another time indicated the cause fairly well. He called for a locket which my wife sometimes wears, but had not then on, which had belonged to her father 40 years ago. He recognised my father's watch, asked for the chain belonging to it, and was still unsatisfied for want of some appendage which I could not think of at the time, but which my wife later on reminded me of, and Phinuit at another sitting seized,—a seal which had been usually worn with it, and which had belonged to my grandfather.

He pulled my sister's watch out of her pocket and said it had been her mother's, but disconnected the chain and said that didn't belong, which was quite right. Even little pocket things, such as fruit-knives and corkscrews, he also assigned to their late owners; and once he quite unexpectedly gripped the arm of the chair Mrs. Piper was sitting in, which had never been mentioned to him in any way, and said that it had belonged to my Aunt Anne. It was quite true: it was an old-fashioned ordinary type of armchair which she valued and had had re-upholstered for us as a wedding present 12 years ago. Phinuit, by the way, did not seem to realise that it was a chair: he asked what it was, and said he took it for part of an organ.

But perhaps the best instance of a recognised object was one entrusted to me by the Rev. John Watson, at that time quite a recent friend of mine, with whom I had been staying recently in Italy,—a chain which had belonged to his father. It is the chain referred to in connexion with the episode of reading a letter related on page 177 above.

The package was delivered by hand one evening at my house, and, by good luck, I happened to meet the messenger and receive it direct. Next morning I handed it to Dr. Phinuit, saying only, in response to his feeling some difficulty about it, that it did not belong to a relative. He said it belonged to an old man and had his son's influence on it. He also partially read a letter accompanying it—as described at page 178. Next sitting I tried the chain again, and he very soon reported the late owner as present, and recognising the chain but not recognising me. I explained that his son had entrusted me with it ; on which Phinuit said the chain belonged now to John Watson, away for health, a preacher, and a lot of other details all known to me, and all correct. The old gentleman was then represented as willing to write his name. A name was written in the backward manner Phinuit sometimes affects. It was legible afterwards in a mirror as James Watson. Now, the name of his father I was completely ignorant of.

The father's name turned out to be not James but John—the same as that of the son : and although the facts stated concerning the son, my friend, were practically all correct, I learned three weeks later, when I got a reply from Egypt where he was travelling, that the statements about the father were all wrong. But Dr. Watson told me later that James was the name of his *grandfather*, and that the statements would have a truer ring if they had purported to come from the grandfather instead of from the father. And I understood that the chain—which was the ostensible link of connexion—had belonged to both. The episode cannot, however, be claimed as a success beyond the identification of John Watson and the incidents connected with him.



## CHAPTER XVII

## DISCUSSION OF PIPER SITTINGS

UNLESS the evidence, of which the merest sample has now been given, be held to constitute a sufficiently strong proof that the performances of this particular "medium" are neither lucky shots nor explicable by cunning and imposture, it is premature to examine further into their significance. But as soon as these preliminary suppositions can be unreservedly dismissed, the best plan is to dismiss them thoroughly and waste no more time over them. The possibility of telepathy from the sitter remains.

The question largely turns upon proof of identity : proof of the genuineness of the identity claimed by the communicator. Now if you met a stranger in a railway-carriage who professed to have returned from the Colonies where he had met your friends or relations, of whom he showed knowledge in some decided ways, it would not at first occur to you to doubt his veracity, even though he was a little hazy about the names of relatives, and occasionally mixed things up ; nor would you stigmatise him as a deceiver if he occasionally made use of information supplied by yourself in course of conversation. But directly it was suggested that he might be a thought-reader, detailing to you the unconscious contents of your own mind, it would not be easy rigorously to disprove the suggestion, especially if subsequent access to the friends chiefly mentioned were denied you. This is, however, very nearly, the problem before us.

Only occasionally does the question forcibly arise ; most facts asserted are, of course, within the knowledge of the sitter, and none of those are of any use for the purpose of discrimination ; but every now and then facts, often very trivial but not within the knowledge of the sitter, have been asserted, and have been more or

less clearly verified afterwards ; and in order to assist a special study of these data, with the view of examining how far they are really valuable, I made an index to them, which I published in the *Proceedings*, vol. vi., p. 647, as an Appendix to the Report of the early Piper sittings. To that index a student may refer.

#### EPISODES NORMALLY SELECTED FOR IDENTIFICATION

Concerning the means of identification naturally adopted by living people who are communicating with each other at a distance by telephone, under conditions in which they are debarred from communicating their names, or, what is the same thing, under conditions in which their names might be understood as being falsely given, Professor Hyslop made some interesting experiments which are thus reported in the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research (vol. ix.) :—

In an introduction he explains the object and the method of these experiments, about which there was nothing supernormal at all. A telegraph line was arranged between two buildings of the Columbia University, and a couple of friends or acquaintances were taken independently to each end of the line, only one of them knowing who was at the other end ; and this one (the communicator) was to send messages, at first vague but increasing in definiteness, while the other person was to guess until he could guess correctly and assuredly who it was that was at the other end of the line. The replies and guesses were likewise telegraphed by an assistant stationed with the receiver, for the guidance of the sender. Professor Hyslop's objects in carrying out an extensive series of this kind of experiment are thus stated by himself :—

“ I. To test the extent to which intelligent persons would spontaneously select trivial and unimportant incidents for the purpose of identification—that is, incidents that were not connected, or not necessarily connected, with the main habits of their lives.

" II. To test the accuracy of the identification in connection with both individual and collective incidents, and especially to test how slight or how definite the incident had to be in order to suggest rightly the person it was intended to represent.

" III. To test the success and personal assurance of the receiver of the messages in guessing who is the true sender, in spite of some messages that are misleading or even false, but the bulk of which involves sufficient cumulative facts to overcome the natural scepticism and confusion caused by incoherences and contradictions.

" IV. To study the sources of misunderstanding that might arise under such circumstances when one party was ignorant of the intentions of the other, and the causes of illusion in identification, which we can determine in my experiments, and which are likely to occur in the Piper case."

And he proceeds :—

" In regard to the first of these objects, it is very interesting to observe the uniformity with which perfectly intelligent persons spontaneously chose what would generally be considered trivial incidents in order to identify themselves. This seemed naturally to recommend itself to them, perhaps for the reason that trivial circumstances represent far more isolation than any chosen from the main trend of life, though I noticed no consciousness of this fact in any one. It was simply the instinctive method which every one tended to adopt. The records show very distinctly that, if left to themselves, men will naturally select unimportant incidents for proof of their identity, and it is one of the most interesting features of this choice that the individual relied wholly upon the laws of association to recall what was wanted, after deciding on the nature of the incidents to be chosen. Very often there were interesting illustrations of those capricious revivals in memory of remote incidents which not only resemble so much the incidents in the Piper sittings in triviality, but also represent the caprices and incoherences of associative recall, intelligible to the subject on reflection, but hardly so to the

outside observer. At any rate, the results in this regard completely remove all objections to the Piper phenomena from the standpoint of the triviality of the incidents chosen for identification ; and that is an accomplishment of some worth."

I may further add that though the incidents serving for identification sounded vague to bystanders or readers of the record, yet when they were explained from the point of view of both sender and receiver they were perceived to be distinct enough, and to justify the leap of identification taken upon them. And this fact is of interest in connection with the Piper record, where it has been often felt by readers or note-takers that sitters identify their relatives too easily and fancifully ; for in Professor Hyslop's experiments the identification is often performed on still slighter grounds—often on what would superficially appear no legitimate ground at all—and yet it turns out, when both ends of the line are catechised (as they can *not* be catechised in the real Piper case), that these incidents are perceived to be of force adequate to support the conclusion based upon them. I have been constantly struck, while taking notes for a stranger at a Piper sitting, with the apparently meaningless incidents which were being referred to ; and yet afterwards, when I saw the annotations, I realised their meaning and appropriateness.

Further, in answer to Professor Sidgwick's tentative objection that the sitters in the Hyslop experiments were only *playing* at identification, and therefore were naturally in a more or less frivolous mood, whereas on a spiritistic hypothesis the Piper communicators would be serious and emotional and not so likely to refer to trivial incidents : we may imagine the case of a wanderer not able to return to his home, but able to communicate with it for a few minutes by telephone. In however strenuous and earnest a spirit he might be,—indeed, both ends of the line might be,—yet when asked to prove his identity and overcome the dread of illusion and personation, he would instinctively try to

think of some trifling and absurd private incident ; and this might very likely be accepted as sufficient, and might serve as a prelude to closer and more affectionate messages, which, previous to identification, would be out of place. And I feel bound to say that my own experience of the Piper sittings leads me to assert that this kind of genuinely dignified and serious and appropriate message does ultimately in many cases come,—but not until the preliminary stages (stages beyond which some sitters seem unable to get) are fairly passed.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SUMMARY OF DR. HODGSON'S VIEWS

OF all men at that time living, undoubtedly Dr. Hodgson had more experience of Mrs. Piper's phenomena than any other—for he devoted years of his life to the subject and made it practically his sole occupation. He did this because, after preliminary study, he recognised its great importance. He was by no means a credulous man—in fact he was distinctly sceptical, and many have been the spurious phenomena which he detected and exposed. In some respects he went, in my judgment, too far in his destructive career—he disbelieved in Mrs. Thompson, for instance, and he practically for the time annihilated Eusapia Palladino, the famous “physical” medium—but hyper-scepticism is more conducive to the development of the subject than hyper-credulity, and when such a man is, after adequate study, decidedly and finally convinced, his opinions deserve, and from those who knew him received, serious attention.

Not that we must be coerced into acceptance, any more than into rejection, of facts, by any critical judgment passed upon them by others ; but undoubtedly his views are entitled to great weight. Accordingly I

extract some of them from a paper which he published in the *Proceedings*, vol. xiii., in the year 1898 ; and I begin with his summary of the kind of statements made by the ostensible communicators as to the way the phenomenon appeared to them, on their side—statements which I judge were provisionally accepted by him as true.

The statements of the "communicators" as to what occurs on the physical side may be put in brief general terms as follows. We all have bodies composed of "luminiferous ether" enclosed in our flesh and blood bodies. The relation of Mrs. Piper's etherial body to the etherial world, in which the "communicators" claim to dwell, is such that a special store of peculiar energy is accumulated in connection with her organism, and this appears to them as "a light." Mrs. Piper's etherial body is removed by them, and her ordinary body appears as a shell filled with this "light." Several "communicators" may be in contact with this light at the same time. There are two chief "masses" of it in her case, one in connection with the head, the other in connection with the right arm and hand. Latterly, that in connection with the hand has been "brighter" than that in connection with the head. If the "communicator" gets into contact with the "light" and thinks his thoughts, they tend to be reproduced by movements in Mrs. Piper's organism. Very few can produce vocal effects, even when in contact with the "light" of the head, but practically all can produce writing movements when in contact with the "light" of the hand. Upon the amount and brightness of this "light," *cæteris paribus*, the communications depend. When Mrs. Piper is in ill-health the "light" is feeblér, and the communications tend to be less coherent. It also gets used up during a sitting, and when it gets dim there is a tendency to incoherence even in otherwise clear communicators. In all cases, coming into contact with this "light" tends to produce bewilderment, and if the contact is continued too long, or the "light" becomes very dim, the consciousness of the communicator tends to lapse completely.

Then floods of excited emotion at the presence of incarnate friends, dominant ideas that disturbed him when he was incarnate himself, the desire to render advice and assistance to other living friends and relatives, etc., all crowd upon his mind ; the sitter begins to ask questions about matters having no relation to what he is thinking about, he gets more and more bewildered, more and more *comatose*, loses his "grasp" of the "light," and drifts away, perhaps to return several times and go through a similar experience.

Sometimes, shortly before the hand starts writing, Phinuit gives notice that some one is "going to talk with you himself."

Sometimes the hand is "seized," and passes through its convulsive vagaries while Phinuit gives no sign, but talks on with the sitter continuously,<sup>9</sup> even after the writing has started. To give an extreme instance of this, at a sitting where a lady was engaged in a profoundly personal conversation with Phinuit concerning her relations, and where I [H.] was present to assist—knowing the lady and her family very intimately,—the hand was seized very quietly, and as it were, surreptitiously, and wrote a very personal communication to myself, purporting to come from a deceased friend of mine, and having no relation whatsoever to the sitter; precisely as if a caller should enter a room where two strangers to him were conversing, but a friend of his also present, and whisper a special message into the ear of the friend without disturbing the conversation.

It occurred to me (continues Dr. Hodgson) that possibly the left hand might also write, and that it might be possible to get both hands writing and Phinuit speaking, all at the same time on different subjects with different persons. On February 24th, 1894, the "Edmund Gurney" control wrote in the course of some remarks about certain "mediums": "In these cases there is no reason why various spiritual minds cannot express their thoughts at the same time through the same organism." I then referred to my proposed experiment with the two hands, and said that I would arrange to try it some time, with "Gurney" using one hand and "George Pelham" the other, but that I was not prepared to make the experiment at that time. At my next sitting, February 26th, 1894, when I was unprepared and was alone, an attempt, only very partially successful, was made to write independently with both hands at the very beginning of the sitting. On March 18th, 1895, another attempt, much more successful, was made, when I was accompanied for the purpose by Miss Edmunds. Her "deceased sister" wrote with one hand, and G. P. with the other, while Phinuit was talking,—all simultaneously on different subjects. Very little, however, was written with the left hand. The difficulty appeared to lie chiefly in the deficiencies of the left hand as a writing-machine.

To a person unfamiliar with a series of these later sittings, it may seem a plausible hypothesis that perhaps one secondary personality might do the whole work, might use the voice and write contemporaneously with the hand, and pretend in turn to be the friends of the various sitters; might in short be a finished actor with telepathic powers, producing the impression not only that he is the character he plays, but that others are with him also, though invisible, playing their respective parts. I do not, however, think it at all likely that he would continue to think it plausible after witnessing and studying the numerous coherent groups of memories connected with different persons, the characteristic emotional tendencies distinguishing such different persons, the excessive complication of the acting required, and the absence of any apparent bond of union for the associated

thoughts and feelings indicative of each individuality, save some persistent basis of that individuality itself.

But here objectors arise.

"Why," they will say, "if discarnate persons are really communicating, do they not give us much more evidence? We ourselves, if put in the witness-box here and cross-examined, could do vastly better even than G. P., and why have so few others been able to show even an approximation to such clearness as he exhibited? Why all the incoherence and confusion and irrelevancy?"

In all cases I should expect at first a confusion in understanding *me*, as well as a confusion in manifesting *to me*. If the cessation from manifestation has been very complete and has lasted a very long time, I should expect a greater bewilderment, for a short time at least, when it began again to manifest. These deficiencies and bewilderments I should expect to be much more marked if such a consciousness, instead of trying to manifest itself once more through its own organism with which it had practised for years, were restricted for its manifestations to *another* organism. In such an event I should expect the manifestations to partake in the first instance of the same lack of inhibitory control, the same inability to appreciate my injunctions and questions, the same dreamy irrelevancy that characterises all the manifestations, in my physical world, of a consciousness that has temporarily ceased to manifest therein and begins once more to reveal itself in what I call the waking state,—varying in individual cases as I find they do in ordinary life,—whether it be after ordinary sleep, or prolonged coma, or anæsthetisation, etc.—but with a tendency for the incoherency of the manifestations to be much more pronounced, inasmuch as the consciousness is trying to regain its wakefulness towards me by an unwonted way. Whether such a consciousness could ever regain its complete former fulness in my world through another organism seems highly improbable. What I should expect to find is that through another organism it could *only partially wake*. Hence I must suppose that even the best of direct "communicators" through Mrs. Piper's trance is *partly asleep*. This is the first point, says Dr. Hodgson, which I wish to emphasise.

Again, that persons just "deceased" should be extremely confused and unable to communicate directly, or even at all, seems perfectly natural after the shock and wrench of death. Thus in the case of my friend Hart, he was unable to write the second day after death. In another case a friend of mine, whom I may call D., wrote, with what appeared to be much difficulty, his name and the words, "I am all right now. Adieu," within two or three days of his death. In another case, F., a near relative of Madame Elisa, was unable to write on the



morning after his death. On the second day after, when a stranger was present with me for a sitting, he wrote two or three sentences, saying, "I am too weak to articulate clearly;" and not many days later he wrote fairly well and clearly, and dictated also to Madame Elisa, as amanuensis, an account of his feelings at finding himself in his new surroundings. Both D. and F. became very clear in a short time. D. communicated later on, frequently, both by writing and speech, chiefly the latter, and showed always an impressively marked and characteristic personality. Hart, on the other hand, did not become so clear till many months later. I learned long afterwards that his illness had been much longer and more fundamental than I had supposed. The continued confusion in his case seemed explicable if taken in relation with the circumstances of his prolonged illness, including fever, but there was no assignable relation between his confusion and the state of my own mind.

Returning to the actual circumstances, I say that *if* the "spirits" of our "deceased" friends do communicate as alleged through the organisms of still incarnate persons, we are *not* justified in expecting them to manifest themselves with the same fulness of clear consciousness that they exhibited during life. We should on the contrary expect even the best communicators to fall short of this for the two main reasons: (1) loss of familiarity with the conditions of using a gross material organism at all—we should expect them to be like fishes out of water or birds immersed in it; (2) inability to govern precisely and completely the particular gross material organism which they are compelled to use. They learned when living to play on one very complicated speaking and writing machine, and suddenly find themselves set down to play on another of a different make.

There are, indeed, three kinds of confusion that need to be distinguished by the investigator: (1) the confusion in the "spirit," whether he is communicating or not, due primarily to his mental and bodily conditions when living; (2) the confusion in the "spirit" produced by the conditions into which he comes when in the act of communicating; (3) the confusion in the result due to the failure of complete control over the writing (or other) mechanism of the medium. (2) and (3) are increased very much by the failures of sitters to understand the process. Thus when a "Mrs. Mitchell" control was requested to repeat words which we had difficulty in deciphering, she wrote:—

No, I can't, it is too much work and too weakening, and I cannot repeat—you must help me and I will prove myself to you. I cannot collect my thoughts to repeat sentences to you. My darling husband, I am not away from you, but right by your side. Welcome me as you would if I were with you in the flesh and blood body. [Sitter asks for test.] \* \* \* I cannot tell myself just how you hear me, and it bothers me a little . . .

how do you hear me speak, dear, when we speak by thought only? Your thoughts do not reach me at all when I am speaking to you, but I hear a strange sound and have to half guess. . . .

Of such confusions as I have indicated above I cannot find any satisfactory explanation in "telepathy from the living" (continues Dr. Hodgson), but they fall into a rational order when related to the personalities of the "dead."

The persistent failures of many communicators under varying conditions; the first failures of other communicators who soon develop into clearness in communicating, and whose first attempts apparently can be made much clearer by the assistance of persons professing to be experienced communicators; the special bewilderment, soon to disappear, of communicators shortly after death and apparently in consequence of it; the character of the specific mental automatisms manifest in the communications; the clearness of remembrance in little children recently deceased as contrasted with the forgetfulness of childish things shown by communicators who died when children many years before,—all present a definite relation to the personalities alleged to be communicating, and are exactly what we should expect if they are actually communicating, under the conditions of Mrs. Piper's trance manifestations. The results fit the claim.

On the other hand these are not the results which we should expect on the hypothesis of telepathy from the living. If the hypothesis of telepathy from the living is acted upon in anything like the ordinary experimental way, the supernatural results will be lessened. If the investigator persistently refuses to regard the communications as coming from the sources claimed, he will not get the best results. If, on the other hand, he acts on the hypothesis that the communicators are "spirits" acting under adverse conditions, and if he treats them as he would a living person in a similar state, he will find an improvement in the communications.

And having tried the hypothesis of telepathy from the living for several years, and the "spirit" hypothesis also for several years,—says Dr. Hodgson,—I have no hesitation in affirming with the most absolute assurance that the "spirit" hypothesis is justified by its fruits, and the other hypothesis is not.

## CHAPTER XIX

## MORE RECENT PIPER SITTINGS. GENERAL INFORMATION.

THE preceding account of my own sittings dates from 1889-90. I saw Mrs. Piper again on 9th Nov., 1906, at Liverpool, where she had just arrived from America, and was staying in the house of Mrs. Isaac Thompson of Liverpool, whose acquaintance she had made on her previous visit to this country. Another series of sittings then began, but at a rate of only two or three per week instead of two a day, and of the general character of these I now propose to give an account.

Since our first English experience with Mrs. Piper a great mass of material had been accumulated in America, under the management of Dr. Hodgson, and the manner of the sittings had somewhat changed. In the old days communication had always been made with the voice, and any writing done was only brief and occasional. Communications are now almost entirely in writing, and only under exceptional circumstances is the voice employed.

The manner of preparation was as follows. A quiet room was selected in which interruption need not be feared ; a fire was provided for warmth, and the windows were open for ventilation. A comfortable chair was placed near a table, on which was a pile of from four to six cushions or pillows, on which the medium sitting in the chair and leaning forward could securely rest the side of her head when sleep came on,—not burying her face in the cushions, but turning it to the left side so as to be able to breathe during the trance. If it ever happened that the pillows incommoded the breathing, they had to be adjusted and pressed down by the experimenter in charge, so that air obtained free access to the mouth and nose. On the right hand side of the

pillows, either on the same or on a small subsidiary table, the writing materials were arranged, namely, a large pad or block-book (10" x 8") of 100 blank sheets all numbered in order, and four or five pencils of soft lead, 2 B or 3 B, properly cut and ready.

It was the duty of the experimenter in charge to record all that the sitter said. This could generally be done sideways on the same sheet without interfering with the medium's hand. He also had to arrange the pad so that the hand could conveniently write upon it ; and to tear off the sheets as they were done with. No attempt was made to economise paper ; the automatic writing was large and scrawling, and did not often begin at the top of the page. Sometimes a good deal of writing was obtained on a single page, sometimes only a few lines, and occasionally only a few words. The tearing off of the old sheet was quickly done ; and the hand waited the moment necessary ; though sometimes, when in the midst of an energetic message, it indicated momentary impatience at the interruption.

Mrs. Piper and her daughters often had breakfast with the family, though occasionally she breakfasted in her room. On ordinary days she went shopping or sight-seeing, or was otherwise ordinarily occupied ; but on sitting days she went back after breakfast to her own room to be quiet. At the time fixed for the sitting, say 10 or 10.30 a.m., Mrs. Piper came into the arranged room and seated herself in the chair in front of the pillows ; then the experimenter in charge sat down on a chair near the table, leaving a vacant chair between him and the medium, from the sitter ; who at my sittings was sometimes present from the first, but at those held in London was introduced only after the trance had come on. Mrs. Piper sat with her hands on the pillows in front of her ; about five minutes of desultory conversation followed, then heavy breathing began, and the head of the medium presently dropped on to her hands on the pillows and turned itself with its face to the left.

Then almost at once the right hand disengaged itself and fell on the table near the writing materials. After

about 30 seconds of complete quiescence, this hand alone "woke up" as it were; it slowly rose, made the sign of the cross in the air, and indicated that it was ready to write.

The experimenter then gave the hand a pencil, placing it between fore and middle fingers; it was at once grasped, and writing began. First a cross was drawn, and then the word "Hail" was written, followed usually by "We return to earth this day with joy and peace"; or "We greet you friend of earth once again, we bring peace and love"; or some such semi-religious phrase, signed "R," which stands for "Rector," the ostensible amanuensis.

In the old days the control had styled itself "Phinuit"; now Phinuit never appears, and the control calls itself Rector.

In the old days the tone was not so dignified and serious as it is now: it could in fact then be described as rather humorous and slangy; but there was a serious under-current constantly present even then; the welcomes and farewells were quaint and kindly—even affectionate at times—and nothing was ever said of a character that could give offence. I judge that stupid familiarity or frivolity on the part of a sitter—for which, however, there was no excuse—would have been at once rebuked and checked.

In the old days the going into trance seemed rather a painful process, or at least a process involving muscular effort; there was some amount of contortion of the face, and sometimes a slight tearing of the hair; and the same actions accompanied the return of consciousness. Now the trance seems nothing more than an exceptionally heavy sleep, entered into without effort—a sleep with the superficial appearance of that induced by chloroform; and the return to consciousness, though slow and for a time accompanied by confusion, is easy and natural.

A sitting used to last only about an hour; and on the rare occasions when there is a voice sitting now, an hour is the limit; but a writing sitting seems less of a

strain, and was often allowed to last as much as two hours, though not more.

In the old days, when sittings were more frequent, there were degrees of intensity about them. Occasionally, though rarely, trance declined to come on at all; and sometimes, even when it did, the loss of consciousness seemed less than complete. Under present conditions the trance is undoubtedly profound, and the suspension of normal consciousness unmistakably complete. Once, but only once in my 1907 experience, the trance refused to come on, and the attempt at a sitting had to be abandoned till next day.

Usually after purposely placing herself under the familiar conditions to which she is accustomed, Mrs. Piper is able to let herself go off without trouble or delay.

Great care was taken of the body of the medium, both now and previously, by the operating intelligence. She was spoken of usually as "the light," sometimes as "the machine," though the word "machine" commonly signified only the pencil.

If anything went wrong with the breathing, or if there was insufficient air in the room, or if the cushions slipped so as to make the attitude uncomfortable, the hand wrote "something wrong with the machine," or "attend to the light," or something of that sort; and the experimenter amended the arrangements before the writing went on. The whole thing was as sensible and easy as possible, as soon as the circumstances and conditions were understood. Each experimenter, of course, handed down all the information and Hodgsonian tradition of this kind to the next, so that all the conditions to which Mrs. Piper was accustomed could be supplied beforehand, and so that no injury would happen to her bodily health.

The following illustrates the care taken of the physical conditions and the way they are spoken of. It is an extract from a sitting held by Mr. Dorr at Boston in 1906.

(Rector interrupting a "Hodgson" communication.) Friend, you will have to change the conditions a moment.

[At the beginning of the sitting only one of the two windows in the room was open a very little way. A few moments previous to this time H. J. Jr. noticing that the room was a little close had opened the other window, and G. B. D. had nearly closed it again.]

G. B. D. What is wrong with the conditions? Do you want more air or less?

Well, there will have to be a change in the surroundings, there will have to be more strength, what is it, air, yes, air. And a good deal more just now. Hodgson takes a good deal of strength when he comes, but he is all right, he understands the methods of operation very well (The window was now opened wide). That is better. Now the light begins to get clear. All right, friend.

As the time drew near to the two-hour limit, which has been set as a period beyond which it is undesirable to persist, and sometimes at the end of about an hour and a half, or an hour and three quarters, from the commencement, the experimenter in charge gave a hint that the sitting must terminate soon; or else the controls indicate the same thing, and they then begin to clear up and take farewell. A sitting usually concludes as it began, with the writing of a serious sentence invoking the blessing of the Most High upon the sitter and the group.

The coming out of the trance was gradual, and semi-consciousness lasted for several minutes, during which muttered sentences were uttered, and the eyes, if open at all, only glared in sleep-walking fashion; until almost suddenly they took on a natural appearance, and Mrs. Piper became herself. Even then, however, for half an hour or so after the trance had disappeared, the medium continued slightly dazed and only partly herself. During this time her eldest daughter usually took charge of her. But the trance itself was so familiar to them all that the daughters were not the least anxious, and in another room went on with their letters or needlework unconcerned. After a sitting, one of them was usually called and took her mother for a stroll in the garden. Then everybody had lunch together and talked of ordinary topics, nothing being said about the sitting, and no ill result of any kind being experienced. It

seemed a normal function in her case. The experimenter meanwhile had collected the papers, and arranged them in order, and had removed the pencils and other appliances. Subsequently it was his business to write out legibly all the material accumulated during the two hours of sitting, to annotate it sufficiently, and send it to a typewriter.

The actual record is of course preserved for exact reference whenever necessary. A record was also made of the remarks of Mrs. Piper during the period of awaking from trance. These were more or less mumbled and difficult to hear, but they were often a continuation of what had been obtained during trance, and generally contained useful passages; though part of them nearly always consisted of expressions of admiration for the state or experience she was leaving, and of repulsion—almost disgust—at the commonplace terrestrial surroundings in which she found herself. Even a bright day was described as dingy or dark, and the sitter was stared at in an unrecognising way, and described as a dull and ugly person, or sometimes as a negro. Presently, however, the eyes became intelligent, and she recognised some one—usually Lady Lodge first—and then with a smile welcomed her by name, and speedily came to.

Coming to ordinary social details: it is not an impertinence, but is justified by the special circumstances of the case, to state that the family is an admirable one, and that we regard them as genuine friends.

At the time of Mrs. Piper's first visit her daughters were children. Now they are grown up, and are very useful to their mother. Nothing in any way abnormal or unusual is to be noticed about them, and their mother expresses it as her sincerest wish that they will not develop her power. For though she must realise the value of her services to science, she cannot but feel that it to some extent isolates her and marks her out as peculiar among her neighbours in New England, and that the time spent in the trance state must have made a distinct inroad on her available



lifetime. This however is to some extent the case with any occupation, and it is as the duty specially allotted to her that she has learnt to regard her long service, now extending over a quarter of a century.

In speaking of messages received from a certain "control," it is not to be understood in general that that control is actually manipulating the organism; it may be always, and certainly is in general, merely dictating through an amanuensis as it were,—the actual writer or speaker being either "Rector" or "Phinuit," who again may or may not be a phase of Mrs. Piper's personality.

In the old days, undoubtedly, the appearance was sometimes as if the actual control was changed—after the fashion of a multiple personality; whereas now I think it is nearly always Rector that writes, recording the messages given to him as nearly as he can, and usually reporting in the first person, as Phinuit often did. I do not attempt to discriminate between what is given in this way and what is given directly, because it is practically impossible to do so with any certainty; since what appears to be direct control is liable to shade off into obvious reporting. That is to say, if a special agency gets control and writes for a few minutes, it does not seem able to sustain the position long, but soon abandons it to the more accomplished and experienced personality, Rector. In the recent series there appeared very little evidence of direct control other than Rector.

We shall speak however of the "Gurney control," the "Hodgson control," etc., without implying that these agents—even assuming their existence and activity—are ever really in physical possession of the organism; and, even when they are controlling as directly as possible, they may perhaps always be operating telepathically on it rather than telergically—operating, that is to say, through some stratum of the mind, rather than directly on any part of the physical organism. It is rather soon as yet to make definite assertions regarding the actual method of control—there are too many

unknown quantities about the whole phenomenon,—at the same time Dr. Hodgson has thought it worth while to report the general aspect of the phenomenon as it is said to appear to the *Communicators* themselves ; he does this on page 400 of *Proc.* xiii. (A portion is quoted above on page 190). And in the next few pages he goes on to indicate his own independent view of what is occurring,—giving a detailed description which my own smaller experience, as far as it goes, tends in a general way to confirm.

### *Further Details*

In the old days Mrs. Piper sat upright in her chair, with head somewhat bowed and eyes closed, and with both hands available for holding objects or a hand of the sitter. Now her head reclines throughout on a cushion, with her face turned away. The right hand alone is active, being engaged nearly all the time in writing, with intervals of what looks like listening. The dramatic activity of the hand is very remarkable : it is full of intelligence and can be described as more like an intelligent person than a hand (cf. p. 215). It turns itself to the sitter when it wants to be spoken to by him ; but for the most part, when not writing, it turns itself away from the sitter, as if receiving communications from outside, which it then proceeds to write down ; going back to space—*i.e.* directing itself to a part of the room where nobody is—for further information and supplementary intelligence, as necessity arises (cf. p. 105).

When Mrs. Piper in trance wrote a name in the old days—as Phinuit did sometimes—the writing was usually mirror-writing ; but sometimes she wrote a name on paper held to her forehead, so that the pencil was turned towards her face ; in that case the writing was ordinary. If this should happen to have been so consistently, it is curious. But now that Rector writes, voluminously, the mirror-writing only crops up occasionally ; and usually the only reversal consists in giving the

letters of a name in inverted order, *e.g.* *Knarf* instead of *Frank*.

One other point deserves to be here mentioned :—

In the days of Phinuit considerable facility was shown in dealing with strangers. Persons introduced anonymously had their relations enumerated, and their family affairs referred to, in a remarkably quick and clever way : so much so that they sometimes thought that their special case must have been “got up” beforehand. The facility for dealing with strangers in this way is now much less marked. The introduction of a stranger now makes things slow and laborious, and is on the whole discouraged ; for although the old characteristics continue to some extent, the tests now given are mainly of a different kind. The early procedure was useful at the beginning, and it continued useful for a good many years till a case for investigation was firmly established ; but it must have seemed tedious to prolong that method further, so the group of controls associated with Rector assured Dr. Hodgson that they would take the trance in hand and develop it on better and higher lines.

As to how far the change is an improvement, there have been at times some differences of opinion ; but in view of the remarkable tests recently given under what, though of several years’ standing, may be called the new régime,—tests which have been and are being dissected out by Mr. Piddington,—there can be but little doubt about the reality of the improvement now.

Since this book first appeared Mrs. Piper’s power appears to have vanished. Her controls have said a carefully considered farewell, and no trance will now come on. Whether the suspension or inhibition is permanent or temporary I cannot say. At one time I thought it likely to be permanent, and it would not be surprising after her highly valuable thirty years of service.

## CHAPTER XX

## WAKING STAGE

WHILE coming out of trance Mrs. Piper usually speaks, or rather mutters, at intervals ; and her words are taken down, or such of them as can be heard. It is worth while to quote one record of these ejaculations—which sometimes convey interesting residual information,—and I select the following as a fairly typical case of an unimportant and unevidential but characteristic coming to.

Notes intruded in square brackets are added merely in order to place the reader in the same sort of position, as regards understanding the significance of these subconscious utterances, as a recorder finds himself in after an experience of many sittings.

" I saw you before. It is fearful. [This means that she dislikes changing from her trance state and coming back to ordinary surroundings.]

They are going away. It's awful. Too bad. Snap. [This refers to a sensation which she calls a snap in the head, which nearly always precedes a return to consciousness. Sometimes it heralds almost a sudden return ; and she is always more conscious after a snap than she was before ; but often it takes two snaps to bring her completely to. What the snap is I do not know, but I expect it is something physiological. It is not audible to others, though Mrs. Piper half seems to expect it to be so.]

What are all the people doing ?

[Probably some of the sitters were moving about and leaving the room, under the mistaken impression that the snap meant that interest was over.]

I saw a man in the light, which looked like Mr. Thompson. Kept waving his hand. The man with the cross was helping him out.

[" The man with the cross " is intended to signify Impersonator.]

The sun was shining. [This only signifies that her recent surroundings have been bright and luminous.]

Has an old lady with him. She is helping him read something. I could see his face perfectly.

Noise. [probably something going on outside.] They were talking to me. I came in on a cord, a silver cord. They were trying to tell me something about the children in the body. Lovely place.

Buzzing in my head. Another snap.

Miss Thompson. I thought you were small. Looking through opera glasses at wrong end. You grew larger.

Did you hear my head snap? It breaks.

I forgot where we were sitting.

Why Mrs. Thompson, I didn't know you were there. My cold."

[Mrs. Piper was troubled with a cold at this time. Her intelligence was now normal.]

In further illustration of the waking stage, showing how similar it was in 1906 to what it is now, and as a further description of the curious "snap" sensation, I subjoin an extract from the termination of a sitting, with Henry James Junior and Mr. Dorr, in America in 1906.

I thought you were a stranger.

Well, did you hear my head snap?

H. J. Jr. No.

Didn't hear it? It is a funny sound. Don't you hear it at all? Sounds like wheels clicking together and then snaps. There it is again.

G. B. D. Now you are really back.

## CHAPTER XXI

### GENERAL REMARKS ON THE PIPER SITTINGS

FOR a further account of these sittings my paper in vol. xxiii. of the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research must be referred to. It would take too much space to quote further here. I must be satisfied with a few comments.

It will be observed in many of the records how natural

it is for a sitter, or for the experimenter in charge, to challenge a "control" to furnish some evidence of his identity, or to demand from him a sudden answer to a specific question.

It is quite natural, and I suppose inevitable : but that it also is to some extent unreasonable, must be admitted. Trivial domestic incidents are not constantly in one's thoughts, and only when in a reminiscent and holiday mood, or under the stimulus of friendly chat, does any vivid recollection of such incidents normally occur.

It is proverbially difficult to control thoughts to order, and a communicator suddenly asked to remember an identifying circumstance, or to send an appropriate message, may feel rather as a person feels when set in front of a phonograph and told to "say something brilliant for posterity." Under these conditions any one with the gift might compose some half-doggerel verse perhaps, or might remember some poetry more or less accurately,—and indeed that is what it appears the controls sometimes actually do—but usually there would be hesitation, requests for delay, and fishing for suggestions,—something like what we find in the records. The controls unfortunately cannot be assisted by the give and take of friendly and stimulating conversation ; for, under the conditions of a sitting, the intercourse on our side is nearly all "take" and very little "give." It is admittedly dangerous for a sitter to talk freely, because the conditions then become "loose," and more may be inadvertently given away than was intended, so that thereafter nothing obtained, however otherwise good, can be considered evidential. But then—it must also be admitted—no conversation can be in the full sense stimulating or satisfactory if its animation is hampered by a constant desire to withhold information, lurking in the background.

In order to be human a conversation should be whole-hearted and free from *arrières pensées* on both sides : but under evidential conditions that seems quite impossible. It is one of the many disadvantages under which the investigation of the subject inevitably labours.

## TRIVIAL RECOLLECTIONS, AND RELICS

It will by some people—who might otherwise be in favour of some form of spiritistic hypothesis—be thought absurd that reference should be made under such circumstances to trifles like ordered but undelivered pictures, and to trivialities like the possession of a handkerchief or other relic. The usual excuse is that these things are mentioned for purposes of identification ; but though there may be some truth in that view, there is in my judgment more reason than that for such incidents ; and they are not contradictory of the notion of survival. The fate of objects once regarded with affection, or even interest, and possessing any kind of personal association, does not seem to have suddenly become a matter of indifference. Scattered through all the sittings are innumerable instances of this sort of curious memory of and interest in trifles ; so that it would be merely tedious to refer to pages where they occur. Every experienced sitter knows that such references are the commonest of all. What is the explanation ? I am not prepared with a full explanation ; but, granted the most completely spiritistic hypothesis, it would appear that the state after death is not a sudden plunge into a stately, dignified, and specially religious atmosphere. The environment, like the character, appears to be much more like what it is here than some folk imagine. This may be due to the effort and process incidental to the condition of semi-return, under which alone communication is possible : it appears to involve something less than full consciousness. But it goes rather further than this, since a few of the controls when recently deceased (a pious old lady in particular is in my mind) have said that the surroundings were more “ secular ” than they expected ; they have indeed expressed themselves as if a little disappointed, though they nearly always say that the surroundings are better than they are here. Anyhow, there appears to be no violent or sudden change of nature ; and so any one who has cared for trinkets may perhaps after a fashion care for them still.

But there must be more than that even. Objects *appear* to serve as attractive influences, or nuclei, from which information may be clairvoyantly gained. It appears as if we left traces of ourselves, not only on our bodies, but on many other things with which we have been subordinately associated, and that these traces can thereafter be detected by a sufficiently sensitive person. This opens a large subject which I have touched upon once or twice already in other papers—never with any feeling of certainty or security—and which requires careful handling lest its misunderstanding pave the way for mere superstition.

But to return to common sense, and without assuming anything of this kind, even hypothetically, how do we know that we are right in speaking of some things as trifles and other things as important? What is our scale or standard of value?

No one expects people to be wholly indifferent as to the posthumous disposal of their property, provided it amounts to several thousand pounds. They make careful wills, and would, if they knew, be perhaps displeased if the provisions were not adhered to, or if their final will was lost.

Very well, on what scale shall we estimate property, and how shall we measure its value?

It is conceivable that, seen from another side, little personal relics may awaken memories more poignant than those associated with barely recollected stocks and shares.

That at any rate is the kind of idea which naturally suggests itself in connexion with the subject. Our terrestrial estimate of the comparative importance of things is not likely to be cosmically sufficient or perennially true.

However that may be, it is clear that the various Piper controls do not estimate the importance of property by any standard dependent on pounds sterling. As a variant on old letters, old locketts, and other rubbish, in which Phinuit seemed to take some interest, I once gave him a five-pound note. It was amusing to see how at



first he tried to read it—in his usual way by applying it to the top of the medium's head ;—and then on realising the sort of thing it was, how he crumpled it up and flung it into a corner with a grunt, holding out his hand for something of interest. Needless to say, I did not share in this estimate of value, and, after the sitting, was careful to rescue the despised piece of paper from its perilous position.

## CHAPTER XXII

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF MANNER

SINCE Mr. Myers's death on 17th January, 1901, he has communicated through a considerable number of mediums, especially through Mrs. Thompson, Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Piper. But his communications are too long and important to be summarised here. Some very early attempts are quoted in the larger editions of this book.

I will only quote here, from page 213 of *Proc.*, vol. xxi., an extract from the script of Mrs. Holland in India which was written on January 5th and 6th, 1904, by the Myers<sub>es</sub> control :—

“ Oh, if I could only get to them—could only leave you the *proof positive* that I remember—recall—know—continue. . . . I have thought of a simile which may help you to realise the ‘ bound to earth condition ’ which persists with me. It is a matter very largely of voluntary choice—I am, as it were, actuated by the missionary spirit ; and the great longing to speak to the souls in prison—still in the prison of the flesh—leads me to ‘ absent me from felicity awhile. ’ ”

This clearly expresses the idea of “ service ” which I wish to emphasise, and indicates the reason for the labour bestowed by departed intelligences on the construction and communication of proofs of identity.

GENERAL REMARKS, ADDRESSED TO RELIGIOUS  
OBJECTORS

Good and earnest though moderately intelligent religious people sometimes seek to pour scorn upon the reality of any of these apparent communications—not for any scientific reason, but for reasons born of prejudice. They think that it is not a worthy occupation for “just men made perfect” “who have entered into felicity” to be remembering trivial and minute details, under circumstances of exceptional difficulty, for the purpose of proving to those left behind the fact of survival and the continuance of personal identity. It is taken for granted that saints ought to be otherwise occupied in their new and lofty and favoured conditions.

What may or may not be possible to saints, it is hardly for me or other gropers among mere terrestrial facts to surmise: nor am I anxious to imagine that all our communicators belong to the category of “perfected and glorified saints,”—it seems to me, I confess, singularly unlikely; nor is it necessary to suppose that such exercises as we report—even if they are fully and entirely what they pretend to be—constitute any large proportion of the activity of the people who are professedly concerned in their production—people who are confessedly far from perfection and who have still much to learn. And as regard dignity and appropriateness,—does it not sometimes happen that an Archbishop or a Savant is found willing to play a frivolous childish game, and otherwise to disport himself, in spite of his being on the brink of eternity in a world of sorrow and sin?

But seriously, is it not legitimate to ask these good people whether, if an opportunity of service to brethren arises, an effort to seize it may not be made even by a saint? Whether this notion of perennial service is not in accordance with their own doctrines and beliefs? and whether they are not impressed by that clause in the creed of most Christians which roundly asserts that

their Master descended into Hades? for purposes which in another place are suggested. Whereby they may learn that, even after such a Life and Death as that, Felicity was not entered into save after an era of further personal service of an efficient kind. Those who interpret the parables in such a way as to imagine that dignified idleness is the occupation of eternity—that there will be nothing to do hereafter but idly to enjoy the beatific contemplation and other rewards appropriate to a well-spent life or to well-held creeds,—free from remorse of every kind, and without any call for future work and self-sacrifice,—such people will probably some day find themselves mistaken, and will realise that as yet they have formed a very inadequate conception of what is meant by that pregnant phrase “the Joy of the Lord.”

#### FURTHER COMMENTS

Those who think that there is anything sensational or specially emotional in these communications are mistaken. The conversation is conducted on the same lines as a telephonic conversation: it is liable to the same sort of annoying interruptions, and likewise to the same occasional surprising gleams of vividness,—a happy turn of phrase, for instance, a tone of the voice, and other unmistakable and unexpected revelations of identity—forged or real—such as may be conveyed by an appropriate nickname or by some trivial reminiscence. When this happens, and when relatives are present, their emotions are certainly perturbed.

These remarks are general, and are applicable to this whole group reported on by me: they are not limited in their application to any one particular series.

I have not the slightest interest in attempting to coerce belief of any kind. The facts will make different kinds of appeal to different people, and to some they will not appeal at all. These will regard the whole business with contempt and pity. They are within

their rights in doing so if they have conscientiously read this and the other records. As a rule however that is where they are apt to fail ; and when a person's knowledge of a subject is small, we may be pardoned for holding his opinion concerning it in light esteem.

Among messages interesting to me are some concluding observations, part of which were carefully and laboriously reported by the "Nelly" control of Mrs. Thompson,—the words (repeated below) sounding odd in a childish voice.

(Myers) "I could not say it, but they were translating like a schoolboy does his first lines of Virgil—so terribly confused and inaccurate. But somehow I could not help it. It was not me communicating, yet I saw it going on. . . . I can only think the things, and false things may creep in without my knowing it."

(Nelly) "He said it was not he, but neither was it fraud. He does not want you to stop the phenomenon, he wants to study it. You are not to say it was wrong and get it stopped. He likes to watch the somnambulistic thing at work. It is not he that is doing it, and yet he is looking on. He does not see how it is worked, but he finds this more interesting than the genuine communications. He did not rattle the curtains either . . . but it was not cheating, and he does not want you to make them think that they are cheats. He does not know how it is worked, but he is studying and he thinks it will help a great deal if he can understand how the cheating things that are not cheats are done. . . .

[And then came the laborious sentence]

"He says he is finding out how honest non-phenomena are to be accounted for. Apparently dishonest phenomena are phenomena of extreme [interest] apart from the spirit which purports to be communicating."

Whatever their origin, these words do, in my judgment, represent the truth about a good many of these phenomena—that is to say, that they are not precisely what their surface-aspect implies, yet neither are they fraud. They are attempts at doing something rather beyond the power of the operators,—who arrive approximately at their aim without achieving what they want exactly. They are trying to get something definite

through, let us say, and something like it comes. Occasionally they hardly know how it comes, it is a puzzle to them as to us, and often they don't know what it is that we have got. Sometimes they too seem to be spectators, aware of the result, and to be worried by the misconception and misunderstanding which they see will arise, but which they are powerless to prevent,—except, as here, by trying to instruct us and awaken our intelligences into a condition in which we too can understand and grapple with the unavoidable difficulties of the situation. "I can only think the things": seems to me likely to be an accurate description of the method. It is a telepathic method, and the reproduction by voice or pen is a supplementary and only barely controllable process.

#### MANNER OF THE STANTON MOSES GROUP

It will be of interest to those familiar with the script of Stainton Moses to see the names of his old controls cropping up. Not only Emperor and Rector, but "Prudens" also, who appears to act as an accomplished messenger. I conjecture, however, that whatever relationship may exist between these personages and the corresponding ones of Stainton Moses, there is little or no identity. For instance, a "Doctor" is represented as communicating or controlling, but he appears neither to have, nor to claim, any connexion with the non-medical "Doctor" of Stainton Moses; sometimes at any rate this Piper one is called "Dr. Oliver," and is probably intended to represent a deceased medical man of Boston. It is rather a puzzle to me why Mrs. Piper's personalities should have assumed the same set of names. In general characters they are similar; but I see no very close resemblance in detail. And hitherto the Piper "Emperor" has not given to us the same old earth-name as did the original "Emperor" to Stainton Moses. So that it would appear as if they did not very seriously pretend to be identical.

It is seldom nowadays that there is any marked change of control, such as occurred with Phinuit sometimes. The utterances appear to consist of first-person-reporting on the part of Rector, who speaks or writes after the fashion of a dignified and gentle old man.

It may be noted that in America, with the advent of the Stainton Moses controls, the atmosphere of a sitting sometimes became rather markedly "religious." This can be illustrated by the following close of an American Voice-Sitting in 1906, reported to me by Mr. Dorr :—

("Hodgson" terminating his communication)  
Well, I will be off. Good-bye for the present.  
(Rector resumes.) All right. That is first-rate. Took him a long time to turn round and get out. He dislikes to go more than anybody I ever saw. The last moment he kept talking to me and talking to me. He could not give it up.

#### PRAYER

Father, in Thy kindness guide Thy children of earth, bestow Thy blessings on them, teach them with Thy presence and Thy power to receive suffering, pain, illness and sorrow, teach them to know that Thy presence is always with them. May Thy grace and everlasting love be and abide with them now and evermore.

Farewell. We depart, friends, and may the blessings of God be bestowed on you. Farewell.

#### MANNER OF THE HODGSON CONTROL

The atmosphere of a sitting is always serious, but only occasionally solemn ; usually it is of an even tenor, and sometimes it is hearty and jovial. The following is a characteristic Hodgson greeting extracted from a sitting with Mr. Dorr and Henry James, Jr., at Boston in 1906 :—

Ha ! Well, I did not expect to see you so soon.  
Good morning, Harry !  
I am delighted to see you.

- H. J. Jr. Is that you, Mr. Hodgson ?  
 Yes, it is a great delight to me to see your face once more. How is everything with you, first rate ?
- H. J. Jr. Very well.  
 Why, I feel as though I was one among you. Hello, George !
- G. B. D. Hello !  
 You people don't appreciate my spirit of fun ! But I am Hodgson, and I shall be Hodgson to the end of all eternity, and you cannot change me no matter what you do.
- H. J. Jr. I think we appreciate it, Mr. Hodgson.  
 Well, I hope you do—if you don't, you have lost something, because I am what I am, and I shall never be anything else, and of all the joyous moments of my whole existence, the most joyful is when I meet you all.

This sort of thing is of course not in the least evidential, and yet if I were asked to invent some scheme of salutation more natural and characteristic of Hodgson's personality I should not be able to improve upon it.

#### MANNER OF THE IMPERSONATION GENERALLY

As illustrating the dramatic activity of the hand in an extreme case—though it is always very marked, for the hand is full of " personality " (p. 202)—I quote the following contemporaneous note made by Mrs. Sidgwick during a sitting in which the Myers, control, at length after much effort, had just succeeded in giving *Abt Vogler* as the name of a poem he was referring to.

" The hand is tremendously pleased and excited and thumps and gesticulates. The impression given is like that of a person dancing round the room in delight at having accomplished something."

But indeed the writing which immediately followed this success is worth quoting. The record runs thus :—

" (Rector communicating)  
 He pronounced it for me again and again just as you did,

and he said, Rector get her to pronounce if for you and you will understand, he whispered it in my ear.

E. M. S. Just as you were coming out ?

Just as I left the light.

Volgor, yes.

E. M. S. Good.

(Myers communicating)

Now dear Mrs. Sidgwick in future have no doubt or fear of so-called death as there is none as there is certainly intelligent life beyond it."

With regard to the misspelling which occurs here and elsewhere, the difficulty is readily imaginable, but it is thus expressed by Rector, later, when he is repeating the name of a poem. The record runs thus :—

" Abt ABT. Volg.

(Hand expresses dissatisfaction with this.)

Vogler.

(Rector communicating)

You see I do not always catch the letters as he repeats them.

R.

E. M. S. No, I see.

Therefore when I am registering I am apt to misspell.

E. M. S. I see.

But if you ask me to correct it of course I can. R."

With regard to " fishing " and making use of indications given by the sitter, it seems likely that with the most transparent honesty this would be likely to happen ; because Rector, or any other scribe, is evidently in the position of receiving ideas by a sort of dictation, and need not always be able clearly to discriminate their source, whether from the ultra-material or from the material side. For instance, the Myers' control attempted to speak about the Odes of Horace, and did so ; but Rector, after writing " Odes " without difficulty, appeared doubtful about the word, and wrote " Odessus," " Odesesis," etc., and finally half accepted Mrs. Sidgwick's suggestion "Odyssey" ;—a good instance of how ready Rector is to accept a misleading suggestion, even when what he has independently written is right ; and also of discontinuity of consciousness between Rector and the real communicator, who



in this case was obviously trying to talk about the Odes of Horace, in order to connect them with the quotations from *Abt Vogler* just previously made.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### BRIEF SUMMARY OF OTHER EXPERIENCES AND COMMENT THEREUPON

SOME rather striking sittings were held by a lady named Mrs. Grove, whose deceased friends, a Mr. Marble and some others, sent many appropriate messages, which were in many respects akin to those which had been received by the same sitter through other mediums.

Her friends were perfectly obscure people, totally unknown to Mrs. Piper, and unknown in any district in which Mrs. Piper had been; hence these utterances have an importance of their own, more akin to that of the time when Phinuit showed himself able to deal with the concerns of miscellaneous strangers. They are reported in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research (Vol. xxiii., pp. 255—279), but I do not repeat them here, though I repeat an experiment made in connexion with them:—

### EXPERIMENT ON THE RECOGNITION OF A PHOTOGRAPH OF ONE OF THE CONTROLS

The waking stages of the last sitting of the first Edgbaston series, in December 1906, and of the first of the second series, in May 1907,—with an interval between them of five months,—are worth recording because of an experiment I made in connexion with the likeness of a person supposed to have been communicating during the trance (in this case Mr. Marble): the point being to see whether there would be any recognition of a

photograph by the automatist, before her state had become entirely normal,—that is during the sort of period in which it is customarily possible dimly to remember dreams (see page 204). This stage is referred to by Dr. Hodgson on page 401 of vol. xiii.—where he calls it Mrs. Piper's subliminal stage, and says that it is a condition in which she frequently has visions of the distant or departing "communicators."

On the first occasion I waited rather a long time before trying the experiment,—something more than an hour,—and the recognition was uncertain ; but faint as it was, it seemed to be a residual effect of the trance : since it was not permanent, and by next day had entirely disappeared.

On the second occasion I tried directly after the waking stage was complete ; and then the recognition was immediate and certain. But in a few minutes it had become vague and dim, and before the end of the day it had again completely ceased.

*Sequel to sitting No. 13, which had lasted from  
11.10 to 1.10 on 3rd December, 1906*

After lunch I took eleven photographs of men, and asked Mrs. Piper if she had ever seen any of them. She looked over them, hesitating on the one representing Mr. Joseph Marble for some time, and then picked that out and said she had seen that man somewhere, but she could not remember where. Nothing was said by me during the process, of course.

Next day, in the evening, I tested Mrs. Piper again with another set of photographs of men, partly the same and partly different, but containing among others the critical one. This time, however, it was looked at without comment and without interest, and no remembrance of the appearance seemed to persist. She remembered the fact of having recognised one before ; but when asked to do it again, she picked out, after much hesitation, a different one as a possibility, and said that she thought it had been found in America that the memory evaporated in time, and that it was strongest within an hour of the sitting. The test made the day before had been made about an hour and a half after sitting at which "Mr. Marble" had been one of the communicators. Next time the experiment was tried more promptly.

*Sequel to Waking Stage of No. 14 on 19th May, 1907*

(A number of men's photographs were placed in a row before her as soon as she had come to: she immediately pounced on one without the slightest hesitation.)  
That is the man I saw. I saw him. That is the man I saw.  
I saw him up there: such a nice face. I could see him.  
I could see Mr. Hodgson pushing him up to the front.  
[The selection was correct; the photograph was one of the person she calls Joe, *i.e.* of the late Mr. Joseph Marble.]  
(*An hour or so later.* I again put the photographs in front of her. She looked at them as if for the first time, and said)  
I do not know the photographs.  
(She then hesitated long over the right one, saying she had "seen him somewhere," but finished up by saying)  
No, I do not know.

## COMMENT

The result of this experiment, with other experiences with other mediums also, relating to the description of the personal appearance of a person spoken of in the trance, has satisfied me that—whatever may be the cause—a visual likeness of the people supposed to be communicating in the trance is sometimes really impressed at the time upon the sub-conscious mind of a medium. A veridical dream impression seems to be caused in these cases; but like other dream impressions it fades. The visual impression is merely an extension of the impression of character and of speech, which is also impressed upon the same stratum of her sub-consciousness, and is of a similarly evanescent character.

Undoubtedly the existence of real interest and affection on the part of a person present is an awakening cause of a particular veridical impression. It is that which determines the selection, out of the infinite multitude of other impressions which otherwise might equally well be produced. But although sympathy of this kind is the selective and determining cause, I do not feel that it is the creative or constructive cause. It appears to me that there is an agency or energy lying ready, which

is capable of arousing in the subconsciousness of an entranced person, or of persons endowed with appropriate faculty, a vast multitude of impressions—good, bad and indifferent; and that out of this multitude of possible impressions some are selected with more or less discrimination as appropriate to a particular case,—the presence of a sitter being the detent or trigger which liberates or guides the energy in one direction and not in another.

On the whole, these experiences, with many others which are omitted, tend to render certain the existence of some outside intelligence or control, distinct from the consciousness, and as far as I can judge from the subconsciousness also, of Mrs. Piper or other medium. And they tend to render probable the working hypothesis, on which I choose to proceed, that that version of the nature of the intelligences which they themselves present and favour is something like the truth. In other words, I feel that we are in secondary or tertiary touch—at least occasionally—with some stratum of the surviving personality of the individuals who are represented as sending messages.

I call the touch secondary, because in these cases it is always through the medium and not direct; and I call it generally tertiary, because it represents itself as nearly always operating through an agency or medium on that side also—an agency which calls itself "Rector" or "Phinuit." That these latter impersonations are really themselves individuals, I do not venture either to assert or deny; but it is difficult or impossible to bring them to book, and an examination of their nature may be deferred: it is the impersonation of verifiable or terrestrially known individuals to which it behoves us in the first instance to pay attention.

The fact that a photograph can be clearly recognised when the medium has only seen the person clairvoyantly, on the other side of the veil, is suggestive; since it seems to show that the general appearance is preserved—or in other words that each human body is a true representation of personality.

## DEDUCTIONS

A careful analysis and examination of the facts, both for and against the genuine activity of deceased Communicators, has been made by Dr. Hodgson, and will be found in his Report in *Proceedings*, vol. xiii. pages 357-412. (Extracts are quoted above in Chapter XVIII.) He is led distinctly to countenance, and indeed to champion, a cautious and discriminating form of spiritistic theory,—not as a working hypothesis only, but as truly representing part of the facts. His experience was so large, and his critical faculty so awake, that such a conclusion of his is entitled to the gravest consideration. If I had to pronounce a prematurely decided opinion, my own view would agree with his.

The old series of sittings with Mrs. Piper convinced me of survival, for reasons which I should find it hard to formulate in any strict fashion, but that was their distinct effect. They also made me suspect—or more than suspect—that surviving intelligencies were in some cases consciously communicating—yes, in some few cases consciously; though more usually the messages came in all probability from an unconscious stratum, being received by the medium in an inspirational manner analogous to psychometry.

The hypothesis of surviving intelligence and personality,—not only surviving but anxious and able with difficulty to communicate,—is the simplest and most straightforward, and the only one that fits all the facts. But the process of communication is sophisticated by many influences, so that it is very difficult, perhaps at present impossible, to disentangle and exhibit clearly the part that each plays.

One thing that conspicuously suggests itself is that we are here made aware, through these trivial but illuminating facts, of a process which by religious people has always been recognised and insisted on, viz. the direct interaction of incarnate with discarnate mind,—that is to say, an intercourse between mind and mind in more than one grade of existence, by means apart

from, and independent of, the temporary mechanism of the body.

The facts indeed open the way to a perception of the influence of spirit generally, as a guiding force in human and terrestrial affairs,—active not under the exceptional circumstances of trance alone, but always and constantly and normally,—so uniformly active in fact that by ordinary people the agency is undetected and unperceived. Most people are far too busy to attend: they are too thoroughly occupied with what for the time are certainly extremely important affairs. A race of inspired people would be hopelessly unpractical,—though Society is usually grateful for the existence and utterance of a few individuals of this type.

The fact that these communications are obtained through subconscious agency is sometimes held to militate against their importance as a subject of study. But have not men of genius sometimes testified that brilliant ideas do surge up into their consciousness from some submerged stratum, at a time when they are incompletely awake to the things of this world? And ordinary people are aware that a brown study favours the conscious reception of something presumably akin to inspiration, by relegating ordinary experience to the background, and thereby enabling new and unfamiliar ideas to enter or germinate in the mind.

A trance, or any state of complete unconsciousness renders the normal though obscure activity of an unfamiliar psychical region still more manifest. Not indeed to the patient—who is unaware of the whole phenomenon, or remembers it only after the indistinct and temporary fashion of a dream—but to an observer or experimenter, who is allowed to enlarge his experience and to receive impressions by deputy; thereby attaining, at second hand, some of the privileges of intuition or clairvoyance, or even of genius, while he himself remains in an ordinary and business-like condition. His experience in fact may be regarded as an undeserved, and therefore only moderately valuable, kind of vicarious inspiration.

## CHAPTER XXIV

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF CROSS-  
CORRESPONDENCE

THE subject of cross-correspondence is so large and complicated that any one who wishes to form an opinion on it is bound to study the detailed publications by Mr. Piddington, Mrs. Verrall, Miss Johnson, and others, in recent volumes of the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research. It would be impossible otherwise to give the critical and substantial study which the elaborate literary references demand. Whatever else they are, they are eminently communications from men of letters, to be interpreted by scholars, and they are full of obscure classical allusions. And parenthetically I may here state, as a noteworthy fact, that nowadays even through Mrs. Piper such scholarly allusions are obtained,—not obvious and elementary ones, but such as exhibit a range of reading far beyond that of ordinary people—beyond my own for instance—and beyond that of anyone present at the time.

Returning to the general subject of cross-correspondence,—the main feature of this kind of communication is that we are required to study, not the phenomena exhibited by a single medium actuated by a number of ostensible controls, as heretofore, but conversely the utterance of one ostensible control effected through the contributory agency of several different mediums;—who write automatically quite independently of each other, who are at a distance from each other, who are sometimes unknown to each other, and who at first were unaware that any kind of correspondence was going on.

In many cases, moreover, the messages as separately obtained were quite unintelligible, and only exhibited a meaning when they were subsequently

put together by another person. So that the content of the message was in no living mind until the correspondences were detected by laborious criticism a year or two later; then at last the several parts were unified and the whole message and intention made out.

The object of this ingenious and complicated effort clearly is to prove that there is some definite intelligence underlying the phenomena, distinct from that of any of the automatists, by sending fragments of a message or literary reference which shall be unintelligible to each separately—so that no effective mutual telepathy is possible between them,—thus eliminating or trying to eliminate what had long been recognised by all members of the Society for Psychical Research as the most troublesome and indestructible of the semi-normal hypotheses. And the further object is evidently to prove as far as possible, by the substance and quality of the message, that it is characteristic of the one particular personality who is ostensibly communicating, and of no other.

That has clearly been the aim of the communicators themselves. Whether or not they have been successful is a question which it may take some time and study finally and conclusively to decide.

If a student is to form a first hand judgment of any value on this subject, he must, as I have said, read in full the elaborate papers of Mr. Piddington and Miss Johnson and Mrs. Verrall in the important recent volumes of the *Proceedings* of the Society; which is no light task.

### DISCOVERY OF CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES

But as giving the best introductory and purely initial account of this large and evidently growing subject, I will quote from the paper of our Research Officer, Miss Johnson, her Chapter VII. called "The Theory of Cross-correspondences," since it was through her patient care and perspicacity that the existence of such things,



on the way to something like their present striking form, was first demonstrated.

It opens with a quotation from the writings of F. W. H. Myers, which illustrates his attitude to the subject when living :—

“ It is not we who are in reality the discoverers here. The experiments which are being made are not the work of earthly skill. All that we can contribute to the new result is an attitude of patience, attention, care ; an honest readiness to receive and weigh whatever may be given into our keeping by intelligences beyond our own. Experiments, I say, there are ; probably experiments of a complexity and difficulty which surpass our imagination ; but they are made from the other side of the gulf, by the efforts of spirits who discern pathways and possibilities which for us are impenetrably dark.” (*Human Personality*, vol. ii. p. 275.)

And then it continues :—

“ In *Human Personality* Mr. Myers hints more than once at a favourite theory of his that the influence of science on modern thought is not confined to this life alone, but may be carried on into the next, and so tend to improve the evidence for communication from the dead. The latter, he suggests, are coming to understand more and more clearly what constitutes really good evidence, and may gradually discover better means of producing it. [In the above passage he formulates this conjecture most clearly, and] it would seem from our recent investigations that some such experiments as he there foreshadowed may actually be taking place.

“ Mr. Myers and Dr. Hodgson made attempts at different times to obtain connections between the utterances—either spoken or written—of different automatists. It is by no means easy even to obtain suitable conditions for trying such experiments, and unfortunately, as far as I am aware, no complete record of these attempts seems to exist. Some references to them, however, occur in a number of letters written by Mr. Myers to Mrs. Thompson ; for instance, on October 24th, 1898, he wrote as follows :

“ ‘Dr. Hodgson is staying on in America for the winter, sitting with Mrs. Piper. It would be grand if we could get communication between the “controls” on each side.’ ”

Some interesting connections between the automatisms of Mrs. Thompson and those of other sensitives were already recorded in Mr. Piddington's paper, ‘On the Types of Phenomena displayed in Mrs. Thompson's trance,’ in *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xviii. pp. 104-307.

But the most notable development of cross-correspondence, and the first appearance of a really complicated and remarkably evidential type of them, have taken place since Mr. Myers's death.

This was shown first in Mrs. Verrall's script, and a considerable section of her *Report* on it (*Proc.* vol. xx. pp. 205-275) is devoted to an account of the cross-correspondences between her script and the script or automatic speech of other automatists.

“ In studying these in proof in the early part of 1906—says Miss Johnson, our Research Officer—I was struck by the fact that in some of the most remarkable instances the statements in the script of one writer were by no means a simple reproduction of statements in the script of the other, but seemed to represent different aspects of the same idea, one supplementing or completing the other. Thus, in one case (p. 223), Mrs. Forbes's script, purporting to come from her son Talbot, stated that he must now leave her, since he was looking for a sensitive who wrote automatically, in order that he might obtain corroboration of her own writing. Mrs. Verrall, on the same day, wrote of a fir-tree planted in a garden, and the script was signed with a sword and suspended bugle. The latter was part of the badge of the regiment to which Talbot Forbes had belonged, and Mrs. Forbes had in her garden some fir-trees, grown from seed sent to her by her son. These facts were unknown to Mrs. Verrall.

" In another case (pp. 241-245)—too complicated to summarise here—Mrs. Forbes produced, on November 26th and 27th, 1902, references, absolutely meaningless to herself, to a passage in the *Symposium* which Mrs. Verrall had been reading on these days. These references also applied appropriately to an obscure sentence in Mrs. Verrall's own script of November 26th; and on December 18th, attempts were made in Mrs. Forbes's script to give a certain test word, 'Dion' or 'Dy,' which, it was stated, 'will be found in Myers's own. . . .' Mrs. Verrall interpreted the test word at the time, for reasons given, as 'Diotima,' and a description of the same part of the *Symposium*, including the mention of Diotima, did occur in *Human Personality*, which was published about three months later, in February 1903. Further references to the *Symposium* appeared in Mrs. Forbes's script in the early part of 1903 (see Mrs. Verrall's *Report*, p. 246).

" In another case (pp. 269-271), October 16th, 1904, Mrs. Verrall's script gave details, afterwards verified, of what Mrs. Forbes was doing; and immediately afterwards Mrs. Verrall had a mental impression of Mrs. Forbes sitting in her drawing-room, with the figure of her son standing looking at her. Mrs. Forbes's script of the same day, purporting to come from her son, stated that he was present and wished she could see him, and that a test was being given for her at Cambridge.

" I became convinced through the study of these cases that there was some special purpose in the particular form they took,—all the more because in Mrs. Verrall's script statements were often associated with them, apparently to draw attention to some peculiar kind of test,—described, e.g. as superposing certain things on others, when all would be clear.

" The characteristic of these cases—or at least of some of them—is that we do not get in the writing of one automatist anything like a mechanical verbatim reproduction of phrases in the other; we do not even get the same idea expressed in different ways,—as might well result from direct telepathy between them. What we

get is a fragmentary utterance in one script, which seems to have no particular point or meaning, and another fragmentary utterance in the other, of an equally pointless character ; but when we put the two together, we see that they supplement one another, and that there is apparently one coherent idea underlying both, but only partially expressed in each.

" It occurred to me, then, that by this method, if by any, it might be possible to obtain evidence more conclusive than any obtained hitherto of the action of a third intelligence, external to the minds of both automatists. If we simply find the same idea expressed—even though in different forms—by both of them, it may, as I have just said, most easily be explained by telepathy between them ; but it is much more difficult to suppose that the telepathic perception of *one* fragment could lead to the production of *another* fragment which can only, after careful comparison, be seen to be related to the first.

" The weakness of all well-authenticated cases of apparent telepathy from the dead is, of course, that they can generally be explained by telepathy from the living. If the knowledge displayed by the medium is possessed by any person certainly existing,—that is, any living person,—we must refer it to that source rather than to a person whose existence is uncertain,—that is, a dead person. To do otherwise would be to beg the whole question at issue, for the very thing to be proved is the existence of the dead person.

" Hitherto the evidence for survival has depended on statements that seem to show the control's recollection of incidents in his past life. It would be useless for him to communicate telepathically anything about his present life, because there could be no proof of the truth of the communication. This is the fundamental difference between the types of evidence for telepathy from the living and for telepathy from the dead.

" Now, telepathy relating to the present, such as we sometimes get between living persons, must be stronger evidentially than telepathy relating to the past, because it is much easier to exclude normal knowledge of events

in the present than of events in the past. But it has been supposed impossible that we could ever get this kind of evidence for telepathy from the dead ; since events in the present are either known to some living person,—in which case we could not exclude his telepathic agency,—or they are unknown to any living person, in which case it would be difficult or impossible to prove that they had occurred.

“ In these cross-correspondences, however, we find apparently telepathy relating to the present,—that is, the corresponding statements are approximately contemporaneous,—and to events in the present which, to all intents and purposes, are unknown to any living person ; since the meaning and point of her script is often uncomprehended by each automatist until the solution is found through putting the two scripts together. At the same time we have proof of what has occurred [*i.e.* some special indication that a correspondence is being attempted] in the scripts themselves. Thus it appears that this method is directed towards satisfying our evidential requirements.

“ Now, granted the possibility of communication, it may be supposed that within the last few years a certain group of persons have been trying to communicate with us, who are sufficiently well instructed to know all the objections that reasonable sceptics have urged against the previous evidence, and sufficiently intelligent to realise to the full all the force of these objections. It may be supposed that these persons have invented a new plan,—the plan of cross-correspondences,—to meet the sceptics' objections. There is no doubt that the cross-correspondences are a characteristic element in the scripts that we have been collecting in the last few years,—the scripts of Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Holland, and, still more recently, Mrs. Piper. And the important point is that the element is a new one. We have reason to believe, as I have shown above, that the idea of making a statement in one script *complementary* of a statement in another had not occurred to Mr. Myers in his lifetime,—for there is no reference to it in any of

his written utterances on the subject that I have been able to discover. Neither did those who have been investigating automatic script since his death invent this plan, if plan it be. It was not the automatists themselves that detected it, but a student of their scripts; it has every appearance of being an element imported from outside; it suggests an independent invention, an active intelligence constantly at work in the present, not a mere echo or remnant of individualities of the past."

Yes, it suggests an independent invention—*an active intelligence constantly at work in the present, not a mere echo or remnant of individualities of the past.*

And so the matter has gone on developing, and a still further and more elaborate system of evidently experimental and designed cross-correspondence has now been discovered by Mr. Piddington in the scripts of the automatists mentioned, when independently compared together; with veiled statements in those same scripts which symbolically but definitely claim that such correspondences are to be found if looked for. Those so far discovered are reported in the Society's *Proceedings*—a series of documents upon a consideration of which I do not propose to enter, since at this stage they are not capable of effective abridgement.

### SUMMARY

Summarising once more our position as regards cross-correspondence—we have in the course of the last few years been driven to recognise that the controls are pertinaciously trying to communicate, now one now another definite idea, by means of two or more different automatists, whom at the same time they are trying to prevent from communicating telepathically or unconsciously with one another; and that in order to achieve this deliberate aim the controls express the factors of the idea in so veiled a form that each writer

indites her own share without understanding it. Yet some identifying symbol or phrase is often included in each script, so as to indicate to a critical examiner that the correspondence is intended and not accidental ; and, moreover, the idea thus co-operatively expressed is so definite that, when once the clue is found, no room is left for doubt as to the proper interpretation.

That is precisely what we have quite recently again and again obtained. We are told by the communicators that there are other correspondences not yet detected by us ; and by more careful collation of the documents this has already been found true. The evidence needs careful and critical study ; it is not in itself sensational, but it affords strong evidence of the intervention of a mind behind and independent of the automatist.

“ If this be so—says Mrs. Sidgwick in a Presidential Address—the question what mind this is, becomes of extreme interest and importance. Can it be a mind still in the body ? or have we got into relation with minds which have survived bodily death and are endeavouring by means of the cross-correspondences to produce evidence of their operation ? If this last hypothesis be the true one, it would mean that intelligent co-operation between other than embodied human minds and our own, in experiments of a new kind intended to prove continued existence, has become possible ; and we should be justified in feeling that we are entering on a new and very important stage of the Society's work.”

Consider for a moment the purport and full bearing of a judgment which, though still in form hypothetical, I hold for my own part to be fully justified :—*Intelligent co-operation between other than embodied human minds and our own . . . has become possible.*

It is surely difficult to over-estimate the importance of so momentous an induction when it can finally be made.

Man's practical outlook upon the universe is entering upon a new phase. Simultaneously with the beginning

of a revolutionary increase in his powers of physical locomotion—which will soon be extended into a third dimension and no longer limited to a solid or liquid surface—his power of reciprocal mental intercourse also is in process of being enlarged ; for there are signs that it will some day be no longer limited to contemporary denizens of earth, but will permit a utilisation of knowledge and powers superior to his own,—even to the extent of ultimately attaining trustworthy information concerning other conditions of existence.

## CHAPTER XXV

### TENTATIVE CONCLUSION

**I**F we now try to summarise once more the position at which we have so far arrived—which I have endeavoured to express in the concluding paragraph of the preceding chapter—we shall represent it somewhat as follows :—

The evidence for the survival of man, that is for the persistence of human intelligence and individual personality beyond bodily death, has always been cumulative ; and now, through recent developments of the ancient phenomenon of automatic writing, it is beginning to be crucial.

The fame of Mrs. Piper has spread into all lands, and I should think the fame of Mrs. Verrall also. In these recent cases of automatism the Society has been singularly fortunate ; for in the one we have a Medium who has been under strict supervision and competent management for the greater part of her psychical life ; and in the other we have one of the sanest and acutest of our own investigators fortunately endowed with some power herself,—some power of acting as translator or interpreter between the psychical and the physical worlds. There are also other ladies to some extent concerned in



the recent unsensational but most intelligent phenomena,—especially the one known as Mrs. Holland,—who are likewise above any suspicion of duplicity. But, indeed, the whole thing has been so conducted that no duplicity, either conscious or unconscious, can rationally be suspected; everything has been deposited at the time with responsible persons outside the sphere of influence, and we are at liberty to learn what we can from the record of the phenomena, unperturbed by any moral suspicions.

And what do we find?

We find deceased friends—some of them well known to us and active members of the Society while alive—especially Gurney, Myers, and Hodgson—constantly purporting to communicate, with the express purpose of patiently proving their identity and giving us cross-correspondences between different mediums. We also find them answering specific questions in a manner characteristic of their known personalities and giving evidence of knowledge appropriate to them.

Not easily or early do we make this admission. In spite of long conversations with what purported to be the surviving intelligence of these friends and investigators, we were by no means convinced of their identity by mere general conversation,—even when of a friendly and intimate character, such as in normal cases would be considered amply and overwhelmingly sufficient for the identification of friends speaking, let us say, through a telephone or a typewriter. We required definite and crucial proof—a proof difficult even to imagine as well as difficult to supply.

The ostensible communicators realise the need of such proof just as fully as we do, and have done their best to satisfy the rational demand. Some of us think they have succeeded, others are still doubtful.

The following is Mrs. Verrall's conclusion after years of first-hand experience and careful testing:—

“It cannot be denied that the ‘communicator’ of the Piper sittings and of my own script presents a consistent personality dramatically resembling that of the person whom he claims to be.”

I entirely acquiesce in this judgment. In fact, I am of those who, though they would like to see further and still stronger and more continued proofs, are of opinion that a good case has been made out, and that as the best working hypothesis at the present time it is legitimate to grant that lucid moments of intercourse with deceased persons may in the best cases supervene; amid a mass of supplementary material, quite natural under the circumstances, but mostly of a presumably subliminal and less evidential kind.

The boundary between the two states—the known and the unknown—is still substantial, but it is wearing thin in places; and like excavators engaged in boring a tunnel from opposite ends, amid the roar of water and other noises, we are beginning to hear now and again the strokes of the pickaxes of our comrades on the other side.

So we presently come back out of our tunnel into the light of day, and relate our experience to a busy and incredulous, or in some cases too easily credulous, world. We expect to be received with incredulity; though doubtless we shall be told in some quarters that it is all stale news, that there has been access to the other side of the mountain range from time immemorial, and that our laboriously constructed tunnel was quite unnecessary. Agile climbers may have been to the top and peeped over. Flying messages from the other side may have arrived; pioneers must have surveyed the route. But we, like the navvies, are unprovided with wings, we dig and work on the common earth, our business is to pierce the mountain at some moderate elevation, and construct a permanent road or railway for the service of humanity.

What we have to announce, then, is no striking novelty, no new method of communication, but only the reception, by old but developing methods, of carefully constructed evidence of identity more exact and more nearly complete than perhaps ever before. Carefully constructed evidence, I say. The constructive ingenuity exists quite as much on the other side of the partition

as on our side: there has been distinct co-operation between those on the material and those on the immaterial side; and we are at liberty, not indeed to announce any definite conclusion, but to adopt as a working hypothesis the ancient doctrine of a possible intercourse of intelligence between the material and some other, perhaps etherial, order of existence.

Some people have expected or hoped to communicate with Mars; it appears likely that recognised communication may some day occur with less removed, and indeed less hypothetical, dwellers in (or perhaps not in) the realm of space.

But let us not jump to the conclusion that the idea of "space" no longer means anything to persons removed from the planet. They are no longer in touch with *matter* truly, and therefore can no longer appeal to our organs of sense, as they did when they had bodies for that express purpose; but, for all we know, they may exist in the ether and be as aware of space and of the truths of geometry, though not of geography, as we are. Let us not be too sure that their condition and surroundings are altogether and utterly different from those of mankind. That is one of the things we may gradually find out not to be true.

Meanwhile is there anything that provisionally and tentatively we can say is earnestly taught to those who are willing to make the hypothesis that the communications are genuine?

The first thing we learn, perhaps the only thing we clearly learn in the first instance, is *continuity*. There is no such sudden break in the conditions of existence as may have been anticipated; and no break at all in the continuous and conscious identity of genuine character and personality. Essential belongings, such as memory, culture, education, habits, character, and affection,—all these, and to a certain extent tastes and interests,—for better for worse, are retained. Terrestrial accretions, such as worldly possessions, bodily pain and disabilities, these for the most part naturally drop away.

Meanwhile it would appear that knowledge is not suddenly advanced—it would be unnatural if it were,—we are not suddenly flooded with new information, nor do we at all change our identity; but powers and faculties are enlarged, and the scope of our outlook on the universe may be widened and deepened, if effort here has rendered the acquisition of such extra insight legitimate and possible.

On the other hand, there are doubtless some whom the removal of temporary accretion and accidents of existence will leave in a feeble and impoverished condition; for the things are gone in which they trusted, and they are left poor indeed. Such doctrines have been taught, on the strength of vision and revelation—quite short of any recognised Divine revelation—for more than a century. The visions of Swedenborg, divested of their exuberant trappings, are not wholly unreal, and are by no means wholly untrue. There is a general consistency in the doctrines that have thus been taught through various sensitives, and I add my testimony to the rational character of the general survey of the universe made by Myers in his great and eloquent work.

END OF SECTION IV.

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